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Commission on Sustainable Development

Report on the sixteenth session (11 May 2007 and 5-16 May 2008)

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Note

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft decision recommended by the Commission for adoption by the Council

1. The Commission on Sustainable Development recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the Commission on Sustainable Development on its sixteenth session and provisional agenda for the seventeenth session of the Commission

The Economic and Social Council takes note of the report of the Commission on Sustainable Development on its sixteenth session and approves the provisional agenda for the seventeenth session of the Commission as set out below.

Provisional agenda

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Thematic cluster for the implementation cycle 2008-2009 (policy session):
   (a) Agriculture;
   (b) Rural development;
   (c) Land;
   (d) Drought;
   (e) Desertification;
   (f) Africa.
4. Provisional agenda for the eighteenth session of the Commission.
5. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its seventeenth session.

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

2. The attention of the Council is drawn to the following decisions adopted by the Commission at its sixteenth session:

Decision 16/1
Participation of intergovernmental organizations in the work of the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

At its 2nd meeting, on 5 May 2008, the Commission on Sustainable Development decided to approve the requests of the following intergovernmental organizations to participate as observers in the work of the sixteenth session of the Commission: Baltic 21; CAB International; and Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific.

Decision 16/2
Review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

At its 21st meeting, on 16 May 2008, the Commission on Sustainable Development, recalling its decision at its thirteenth session to devote one day of its review sessions to review the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation,[1] further decided that that day should be devoted exclusively to the review of the Strategy.

Decision 16/3
Proposed strategic framework for the period 2010-2011: subprogramme 4, Sustainable development

At its 21st meeting, on 16 May 2008, the Commission on Sustainable Development decided to take note of the note by the Secretary-General on the proposed strategic framework for the period 2010-2011: subprogramme 4, Sustainable development.[2]

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[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 9* (E/2005/29), chap. I, sect. C, resolution 13/1.

[2] E/CN.17/2008/14.

Chapter II

Thematic cluster for the implementation cycle 2008-2009: (a) agriculture; (b) rural development; (c) land; (d) drought; (e) desertification; (f) Africa

A. Overall review

3. The Commission considered item 3 of its agenda at its 2nd to 13th and 16th to 21st meetings, from 5 to 9, on 12, and from 14 to 16 May 2008. The documents before the Commission under this agenda item are posted on the website of the Division for Sustainable Development: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/docs_csd16.htm.

4. At its 2nd meeting, on 5 May, the Commission heard presentations on the outcomes of intersessional events by the following: Ilan Simon Fluss (Israel), on the outcome of the panel discussions on water convened during the Water Technologies and Environmental Control (WATEC) Conference, held in Tel Aviv on 30 and 31 October 2007; Elfriede-Anna More, International Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (Austria), on the outcome of the Seventh Global Forum on Sustainable Energy, held in Vienna from 21 to 23 November 2007; Liu Tuo, National Bureau to Combat Desertification, State Forestry Administration (China) and National Focal Point for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, on the outcome of the International Conference on Combating Desertification, held in Beijing from 22 to 24 January 2008; Jon Heikki Aas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway), on the outcome of the Oslo Policy Forum on Changing the Way We Develop: Dealing with Disasters and Climate Change, held in Oslo from 27 to 29 February 2008; and Hjálmar W. Hannesson, Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations, on the outcome of the High-level Round Table on International Cooperation for Sustainable Development in Caribbean Small Island Developing States, held in Bridgetown from 25 to 27 March 2008.

5. At the same meeting, the Officer-in-Charge of the Division for Sustainable Development (DESA), United Nations Secretariat, made an introductory statement.

6. Also at the same meeting, a presentation was made by the President of the Worldwatch Institute, Christopher Flavin.

7. At the same meeting, general statements were made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), the United States of America, China, South Africa, India, Canada, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, Zimbabwe and Israel, as well as by the observers for Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Iraq (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of Arab States), Tonga (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the small island developing States of the Pacific that are Members of the United Nations), Grenada (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Alliance of Small Island States), Malaysia, New Zealand, Argentina, Bangladesh and Switzerland.

8. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the observer for Palestine.

9. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: workers and trade unions; women; children and youth; indigenous people; non-governmental organizations; local authorities; business and industry; scientific and technological communities; and farmers.

10. At its 3rd meeting, on 5 May, the Commission held a thematic discussion on agriculture, during which the Officer-in-Charge of the Division for Sustainable Development made an introductory statement. The Commission also held a joint thematic discussion on agriculture and rural development at its 5th and 6th meetings, on 6 and 7 May (see paras. 36-46 below).

11. At the 3rd meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Per Pinstrup-Anderson, Cornell University (United States of America); Gregory A. Ruark, National Agroforestry Center, United States Department of Agriculture; Tianzhi Ren, Academy of Agricultural Sciences (China); and Erick Fernandes, World Bank.

12. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Djibouti (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States), the Netherlands, Canada, the United States of America, Israel, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Australia, Indonesia, China, France, the Russian Federation and Mexico, as well as by the observers for Barbados (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Alliance of Small Island States), Tonga (on behalf of the small island developing States of the Pacific that are Members of the United Nations), Egypt and Argentina.

13. A statement was made by the observer for the European Commission (on behalf of the European Union).

14. Statements were also made by the representatives of the following major groups: workers and trade unions; and scientific and technological communities.

15. At its 3rd (parallel) meeting, the Commission held a regional discussion on Africa, at which the outcome of the regional implementation meeting was presented by the representative of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

16. At the same (parallel) meeting, statements were made by the following panellists: Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; Alioune Badiane, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); and Sally Bunning, Natural Resources and Environment Department, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

17. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of South Africa, Senegal, Sweden, Zimbabwe, Guinea and Israel, as well as by the observers for Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic, Algeria and Egypt.

18. Statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: scientific and technological communities; workers and trade unions; non-governmental organizations; and farmers.

19. Also at the same (parallel) meeting, the Commission held a discussion on the Western Asian region, during which the outcome of the regional implementation

meeting was presented by Djamel Echirk, Ministry of Land Habilitation, Environment and Tourism, Algeria.

20. At the same (parallel) meeting, statements were made by the following panellists: Khaled Abdul Aziz Al Charea, Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (Syrian Arab Republic); and Carol Chouchani Cherfane, Sustainable Development and Productivity Division, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

21. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Saudi Arabia and Israel, as well as by the observers for Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic.

22. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the observer for Palestine.

23. Statements were made by the representative of the children and youth major group, as well as by the representative of Zenab for Women in Development, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

24. At its 4th meeting, on 6 May, the Commission held a thematic discussion on rural development, during which the Chief of the Water, Natural Resources and Small Island Developing States Branch, Division for Sustainable Development, made an introductory statement. The Commission also held a joint thematic discussion on agriculture and rural development at its 5th and 6th meetings, on 6 and 7 May (see paras. 36-46 below).

25. At the 4th meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Olivier Belle, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations; Taghi Farvar, Commission on Environment, Economic and Social Policy, International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources; Yacine Diagne, Environmental Development Action in the Third World (ENDA); Naresh Singh, Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor; and Jeannette Gurung, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management and President of the Adelbon Group.

26. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Mexico (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Concerted Action, known as the Rio Group), Djibouti (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States), India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), the United States of America, Zimbabwe, South Africa, China, the Russian Federation, Canada and Indonesia, as well as by the observers for Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Tonga (on behalf of the small island developing States of the Pacific that are Members of the United Nations), Morocco and Switzerland.

27. Statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: business and industry; and scientific and technological communities.

28. At its 4th (parallel) meeting, the Commission held a discussion on the Asian and the Pacific region, during which the outcome of the regional implementation meeting was presented by the Vice-Chairman (Indonesia).

29. At the same (parallel) meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Sanjay Kumar, National Afforestation and Eco-development Board, Ministry of Environment and Forests (India); Elenita C. Dano, Third World Network; and Meena Bigli, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN).

30. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Thailand and the Republic of Korea, as well as by the observer for Bangladesh.

31. Statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: children and youth; business and industry; scientific and technological communities; farmers; indigenous people; and workers and trade unions.

32. Also at its 4th (parallel) meeting, the Commission held a discussion on the Latin America region and the Caribbean region, during which the outcome of the regional implementation meeting was presented by Ana Bianchi, Department of the Environment and Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, Argentina.

33. At the same (parallel) meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Marianne Schaper, Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), who made the presentation also on behalf of Teresita Borges Hernández, Environment Directorate, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (Cuba); and Sergio Zelaya, Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

34. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the observers for Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Barbados.

35. Statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: workers and trade unions; farmers; business and industry; children and youth; and scientific and technological communities.

36. At its 5th and 6th meetings, on 6 and 7 May, the Commission held a joint thematic discussion on agriculture and rural development. The Commission also held a thematic discussion on agriculture at its 3rd meeting, on 5 May (see paras. 10-14 above), and on rural development at its 4th meeting, on 6 May (see paras. 24-27 above).

37. At the 5th meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Pir gibe dos Santos Tarragô, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations; He Maochun, Research Centre of Economy and Diplomacy, Department of International Relations, Tsinghua University (China); Christopher J. Leaver, Emeritus Professor of Plant Science and Fellow of St. John's College, University of Oxford (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); Edgardo J. Angara, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food, Committee on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies, and Committee on Science and Technology (Philippines); and John Pender, Environment and Production Technology Division, International Food Policy Research Institute.

38. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of India, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, the Czech Republic, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Israel, Cuba, Canada and South Africa, as well as by the observers

for Norway, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Togo, Morocco, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Switzerland, Micronesia (Federated States of), Malaysia, Argentina, Malawi, Tonga (on behalf of the small island developing States of the Pacific that are Members of the United Nations), Mauritania, Brazil and Guyana.

39. A statement was made by the observer for Palestine.

40. Statements were also made by the representatives of the following major groups: children and youth; farmers; workers and trade unions; and non-governmental organizations.

41. At the 6th meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Sergio Miranda da Cruz, Agribusiness Development Branch, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); Puneetha S. Palakurthi, School of Community Economic Development, Southern New Hampshire University, Manchester (United States of America); Colien Hefferan, Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture; and Arne Cartridge, Yara International ASA.

42. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States), Italy, Australia, Japan, China, Belarus, the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the Czech Republic, the Sudan, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, Zambia and Mexico, as well as by the observers for Bulgaria, Barbados (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Alliance of Small Island States), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Papua New Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Norway, Algeria, Nigeria, Morocco, Trinidad and Tobago and Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union).

43. A statement was made by the observer for the European Community (on behalf of the European Union).

44. A statement was also made by the representative of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

45. A statement was made by the representative of FAO.

46. Statements were also made by the representatives of the following major groups: scientific and technological communities; women; children and youth; non-governmental organizations; and workers and trade unions.

47. At its 5th (parallel) meeting, on 6 May, the Commission held a discussion on Europe, the Economic Commission for Europe region, during which the outcome of the regional implementation meeting was presented by Violeta Ivanov, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, Moldova.

48. At the same (parallel) meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Colien Hefferan, Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture; Elisabeth Gauffin, International Federation of Agricultural Producers Development Cooperation Committee and Chairperson, Swedish Farmers' Federation; Peter Creuzer, Agency for Geoinformation, Land Development and Real Estate (Germany); Jiri Hlavàčhek,

Ministry of Environment (Czech Republic); and Nadine Gouzée, Task Force on Sustainable Development, Federal Planning Bureau (Belgium).

49. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Belarus and the United States of America, as well as by the observers for Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union) and Austria.

50. The representatives of the following major groups made statements: workers and trade unions; scientific and technological communities; and children and youth.

51. A statement was made by the observer for Baltic 21, an intergovernmental organization accredited to participate in the work of the Commission at its sixteenth session.

52. Also at its 5th (parallel) meeting, the Commission held a dialogue with the major groups. The Commission also held a joint dialogue with major groups and representatives of the partnerships initiatives at its 11th (parallel) meeting, on 9 May (see paras. 109-115 below).

53. At the same (parallel) meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the major groups of women, children and youth, and indigenous people, after which statements were made by the representatives of the Netherlands and Belgium, as well as by the observer for Austria.

54. Also at the same (parallel) meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the major groups of non-governmental organizations, local authorities, and workers and trade unions, after which statements were made by the representatives of Germany and the United States of America, as well as by the observer for Nigeria.

55. At the same (parallel) meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the major groups of business and industry, scientific and technological communities, and farmers, after which a statement was made by the representative of the United States of America.

56. At its 6th (parallel) meeting, on 7 May, the Commission held a thematic discussion on drought, during which the Officer-in-charge of the Division for Sustainable Development made an introductory statement. The Commission also held a joint thematic discussion on drought and desertification at its 8th (parallel) and 9th (parallel) meetings, on 8 May (see paras. 70-87 below).

57. At the 6th (parallel) meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Anada Tiéga, Convention on Wetlands, Ramsar Secretariat; Scott Christiansen, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas; Enos Esikuri, Environment Department, World Bank; and Estanbacios Castro Diaz, International Indian Treaty Council.

58. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Mexico (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Rio Group), the United States of America, Canada, the Republic of Korea, India, South Africa, Japan, Zimbabwe, Israel, Australia, the Czech Republic, China and Spain, as well as by the observers for Tonga (on behalf of the small island developing States of the

Pacific that are Members of the United Nations), Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Morocco, Argentina and Jordan.

59. A statement was made by the representative of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

60. A statement was also made by the representative of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

61. Statements were made by the representatives of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

62. Statements were also made by the representatives of the following major groups: children and youth; workers and trade unions; scientific and technological communities; indigenous people; and non-governmental organizations.

63. At its 7th and 8th meetings, on 7 and 8 May, the Commission held thematic discussions on land.

64. At the 7th meeting, on 7 May, presentations were made by the following panellists: Amuko Omara, International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco Workers and Allied Workers' Associations; Jolyn Sanjak, Millennium Challenge Corporation (United States of America); Erick Fernandes, Agriculture and Rural Development Department, World Bank; Clarissa Augustinus, Land, Tenure and Property Administration Section, UN-Habitat; and Michael Taylor, International Land Coalition.

65. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), the Netherlands, Senegal, South Africa, India, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, China, the Czech Republic, Belarus, Israel, the United States of America and Thailand, as well as by the observers for Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Solomon Islands (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Alliance of Small Island States), Tonga (on behalf of the small island developing States of the Pacific that are Members of the United Nations), Malaysia, Jamaica, Norway, Switzerland, Egypt and Argentina.

66. A statement was made by the representative of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

67. Statements were also made by the representatives of the following major groups: business and industry; children and youth; and workers and trade unions.

68. At the 8th meeting, on 8 May, presentations were made by the following panellists: Joan Kagwanja, ECA; Rowshan Jahan, Association for Land Reform and Development (Bangladesh); Laureano Del Castillo Pinto, Institute for the Advancement of Water Management; Klaus Deininger, Development Economics Group, World Bank; and Christian Mersmann, Global Mechanism, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

69. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of France, Japan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia,

Zimbabwe and the Czech Republic, as well as by the observers for Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Switzerland, South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire.

70. A statement was made by the representative of FAO.

71. Statements were also made by the representatives of the following major groups: women; non-governmental organizations; farmers; and workers and trade unions.

72. At its 7th (parallel) meeting, on 7 May, the Commission held a thematic discussion on desertification, during which the Officer-in-Charge of the Division for Sustainable Development made an introductory statement. The Commission also held a joint thematic discussion on drought and desertification at the 8th (parallel) and 9th (parallel) meetings, on 8 May (see paras. 78-87 below).

73. At the 7th (parallel) meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Uriel Safriel, National Focal Point for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (Israel); Jeff Herrick, United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Las Cruces, New Mexico; Sanjay Kumar, Ministry of Environment and Forests (India); and Nancy Kgengwenyane, United States Agency for International Development.

74. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Mexico (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Rio Group), Djibouti (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States), Australia, the United States of America, China, Israel, Guatemala, South Africa, Japan, India, Zimbabwe, Canada, France and Senegal, as well as by the observers for Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Iceland, Egypt, Switzerland, Morocco, Argentina, Côte d'Ivoire, the Niger, Norway, Togo and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

75. A statement was made by the representative of the WMO.

76. A statement was also made by the representative of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

77. Statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: children and youth; business and industry; non-governmental organizations; and workers and trade unions.

78. At its 8th (parallel) and 9th (parallel) meetings, on 8 May, the Commission held a joint thematic discussion on drought and desertification. The Commission also held a thematic discussion on drought at the 6th (parallel) meeting (see paras. 56-62 above), and on desertification at the 7th (parallel) meeting, on 7 May (see paras. 72-77 above).

79. At the 8th (parallel) meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Zhang Kebin, College of Soil and Water Conservation, Beijing Forestry University; Joost Brouwer, Commission on Ecosystem Management, International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources; Sara Scherr, Ecoagriculture Partners; Bakary Kante, Division of Environment Law and

Conventions, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and Scott Christiansen, International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas.

80. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Canada, Monaco, Israel, Japan, Indonesia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, China and Guatemala, as well as by the observers for Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Lesotho, Togo, Argentina and Bangladesh.

81. A statement was made by the representative of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

82. Statements were also made by the representatives of the following major groups: children and youth; non-governmental organizations; women; scientific and technological communities; indigenous people; workers and trade unions; and farmers.

83. At the 9th (parallel) meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Nir Atzmon, National Forest Commissioner (Israel); Pierpaolo Faggi, Professor of Human Geography, University of Padua (Italy); Christian Mersmann, Global Mechanism, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; and Carlos E. González Vicente, National Forest Commission (Mexico).

84. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Canada, Haiti, China, Guatemala, the Czech Republic, Zambia, Belarus and Italy, as well as by the observers for Tonga (on behalf of the small island developing States of the Pacific that are Members of the United Nations), the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Egypt, Pakistan and Algeria.

85. A statement was made by the observer for Palestine.

86. A statement was made by the representative of WMO.

87. Statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: farmers; workers and trade unions; scientific and technological communities; indigenous people; women; children and youth; non-governmental organizations; and local authorities.

88. At its 9th to 11th meetings, on 8 and 9 May, the Commission held thematic discussions on Africa.

89. At the 9th meeting, on 8 May, the Chief of the Policy Integration and Analysis Branch, Division for Sustainable Development, made an introductory statement.

90. At the same meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Gerry Noble, Irish physician and micro-insurance expert; David Tommy, UNIDO Liaison Office in New York; Nebiyeleul Gessese, Global Development Solutions, LLC; and Marjatta Eilittä, Agribusiness Program at the International Fertilizer Development Center (Ghana).

91. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), the Netherlands, India, Djibouti (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States), Canada, China, Thailand, South Africa,

the Czech Republic, Zimbabwe and Zambia, as well as by the observers for Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Tonga (on behalf of the small island developing States of the Pacific that are members of the United Nations), Norway, Comoros and Argentina.

92. Statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: non-governmental organizations; and children and youth.

93. At the 10th meeting, on 9 May, presentations were made by the following panellists: Ogunlade R. Davidson, Dean of Post-Graduate Studies, University of Sierra Leone; Mohamed El Sioufi, Shelter Branch, UN-Habitat; Luigi Cabrini, Sustainable Development Division, Word Tourism Organization; and Peter Holmgren, Environment, Climate Change and Bioenergy Division, Natural Resources Management and Environment Department, FAO.

94. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Senegal, Indonesia, Israel, the Russian Federation, Cape Verde, Mexico and Canada, as well as by the observers for Nigeria, Mali, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Jordan, Switzerland, Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Morocco and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

95. Statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: scientific and technological communities; workers and trade unions; business and industry; and farmers.

96. At the 11th meeting, on 9 May, presentations were made by the following panellists: Julie Howard, Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa; Akinwumi Adesina, Policy and Partnerships, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa; Peter Hartmann, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture; and Robert Richardson, Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies, Michigan State University (United States of America).

97. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of the Czech Republic, Japan, the United States of America, the Netherlands, Italy and France, as well as by the observers for Algeria, Togo, Jamaica (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Alliance of Small Island States), Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), the Niger and Argentina.

98. A statement was made by the representative of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

99. Statements were also made by the representatives of the following major groups: local authorities; children and youth; non-governmental organizations; indigenous people; and workers and trade unions.

100. At its 10th (parallel) and 11th (parallel) meetings, on 9 May, the Commission held thematic discussions on the interlinkages and cross-cutting issues of the thematic cluster for the implementation cycle 2008-2009.

101. At the 10th (parallel) meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Peter McPherson, National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (United States of America); Cleophas Migiro, Cleaner Production

Center (United Republic of Tanzania); Mona Elisabeth Brøther, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway); and Nadine Gouzée, Task Force on Sustainable Development, Federal Planning Bureau (Belgium).

102. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Canada, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Cuba, India, France, the Czech Republic, the United States of America, Italy, Sweden, South Africa, Indonesia, Mexico and China, as well as by the observers for Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Tonga (on behalf of the small island developing States of the Pacific that are Members of the United Nations), Malaysia, Norway, Finland, Argentina, Greece, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Barbados.

103. A statement was made by the representative of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

104. Statements were also made by the representatives of the following major groups: children and youth; workers and trade unions; and women.

105. At the 11th (parallel) meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Mazlan Othman, Office for Outer Space Affairs, United Nations Secretariat; and Pedro Sánchez, Earth Institute of Columbia University (United States of America).

106. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of the Netherlands, Canada, South Africa, Guatemala and the United States of America, as well as by the observers for Switzerland, Kenya and Greece.

107. A statement was made by the representative of FAO.

108. A statement was also made by the representative of the major group of non-governmental organizations.

109. Also at its 11th (parallel) meeting, the Commission held a dialogue with major groups and representatives of the partnerships initiatives, during which the Officer-in-Charge, Division for Sustainable Development, made an introductory statement. The Commission also held a dialogue with the major groups at its 5th (parallel) meeting, on 6 May (see paras. 52-55 above).

110. Statements were made by the representatives of the major groups of farmers, scientific and technological communities, and business and industry, after which statements were made by the following representatives of the partnerships initiatives: Loren Finnell, Resource Foundation, Latin American Clean Water Initiative; and Helen Marquard, Supporting Entrepreneurs for Environment and Development Initiative.

111. Statements were made by the representative of the United States of America, as well as by the observer for Norway.

112. Statements were made by the representatives of the major groups of workers and trade unions, local authorities, and non-governmental organizations, after which statements were made by the following representatives of the partnerships initiatives: Kaddu Sebuyna, African Wildlife Foundation, Congo Basin Forest Partnership; and Amanda Luzande, Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership in Southern Africa.

113. Statements were made by the representatives of Sweden and the United States of America, as well as by the observer for Norway.

114. Statements were made by the representatives of the major group of indigenous people, children and youth, and women, after which statements were made by the following representatives of the partnerships initiatives: Claire Servini, Italian Trade Commission, Global Bioenergy Partnership; and Peter Holmgren, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Initiative.

115. Statements were made by the representatives of Austria and Canada.

B. Review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

116. The Commission devoted its 12th and 13th meetings, on 12 May, to the review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, focusing on the thematic cluster for the implementation cycle 2008-2009.

117. At the 12th meeting, a statement was made by the Chairman.

118. At the same meeting, statements were made by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

119. Also at the same meeting, the Officer-in-Charge of the Division for Sustainable Development made an introductory statement.

120. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Australia, Cuba and India, as well as by the observers for Grenada (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Alliance of Small Island States), Slovenia (on behalf of the European Union), Tonga (on behalf of the small island developing States of the Pacific that are Members of the United Nations), Iceland, Maldives, Mauritius, Barbados, Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, the Marshall Islands and Papua New Guinea.

121. Also at its 12th meeting, the Commission held a panel discussion on sustainable land management, drought and desertification, during which presentations were made by the following panellists: Rolph Payet, Special Advisor to the President of Seychelles and co-founder of the Global Island Partnership and the Sea Level Rise Foundation; and Jacqueline da Costa (Jamaica).

122. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Cape Verde, China and Indonesia, as well as by the observer for Jamaica.

123. At its 13th meeting, the Commission held a panel discussion on agriculture and rural development, during which presentations were made by the following panellists: Ena Harvey, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture; Peter Holmgren, Director of the Environment, Climate Change and Bioenergy

Division, FAO; and Rex Horoi, Executive Director, Foundation of the People of the South Pacific International.

124. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Italy, the United States of America and France, as well as by the observers for the Solomon Islands, Austria, Norway, Switzerland, New Zealand, Samoa, Micronesia (Federated States of) and Mauritius.

125. Also at the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: children and youth; and business and industry.

Action taken by the Commission

126. At the 19th meeting, on 15 May, the representative of Grenada (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Alliance of Small Island States) introduced a draft decision entitled "Review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" (E/CN.17/2008/L.3).

127. At its 21st meeting, on 16 May, the Commission adopted the draft decision (see chap. I, sect. B, decision 16/2).

C. High-level segment

128. The Commission held its high-level segment at its 16th to 21st meetings, from 14 to 16 May 2008.

129. At the 16th meeting, on 14 May, the Chairman convened the high-level segment and made an opening statement.

130. At the same meeting, the Secretary-General addressed the Commission.

131. Also at its 16th meeting, the Commission heard ministerial statements on the topic, "The way forward". Statements were made by the following: John W. Ashe, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China); Iztok Jarc, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union); Angus Friday, Permanent Representative of Grenada to the United Nations (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Alliance of Small Island States); Mahe Tupouniua, Deputy Permanent Representative of Tonga to the United Nations (on behalf of the small island developing States of the Pacific that are Members of the United Nations); Ismat Jahan, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are included in the list of the least developed countries); Sahas Banditkul, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand; Gerda Verburg, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, Netherlands; Paavo Vayrynen, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, Finland; John Gormley, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Ireland; József Gráf, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Hungary; Artûras Paulauskas, Minister of Environment, Lithuania; Josef Pröll, Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Austria; Roberto Dobles, Minister of Environment, Costa Rica; Fahad Bin Abdulrahman Baleghnaim, Minister of

Agriculture, Saudi Arabia; Esther Byer-Suckoo, Minister of Family, Youth, Sports and the Environment, Barbados; Du Ying, Vice-Chairman, National Development and Reform Commission, China; Predrag Nenezić, Minister of Tourism and Environment, Montenegro; Ahizi Daniel, Minister of Environment, Water and Forests, Côte d'Ivoire; Marthinus Van Schalkwyk, Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, South Africa; Anil Kumar Bachoo, Minister of Environment and National Development, Mauritius; Kwadwo Adjei-Darko, Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Environment, Ghana; Erlan Nigmatulin, Senator of Parliament, Kazakhstan; Lee Byung-Wook, Vice-Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea; Matthias Machnig, State Secretary, Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany; Mona Brøther, Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway; and Dao Xuan, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Viet Nam.

132. At its 17th meeting, on 14 May, the Commission continued to hear ministerial statements on the topic, "The way forward". Statements were made by the following: Yael Shaltiel, Director-General, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Israel; Bruno Jean Richard Itoua, Minister of Energy and Hydraulics, Congo; Josip Kraljičković, State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development, Croatia; Luis Medeiros Vieira, Under-Secretary of State for Agriculture and Fisheries, Portugal; François Joseph Nzanga Mobutu Ngbangawe, Minister of State in charge of Agriculture, Democratic Republic of the Congo; Ahmed Al Anwar, Assistant Minister for Environmental Affairs, Egypt; and Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Minister of Environment and Tourism, Namibia.

133. At the same meeting, the Commission held parallel high-level round-table meetings on investing in Africa to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development, and interlinkages among the thematic issues, including adaptation to climate change in the context of sustainable development.

134. At the high-level round-table meeting on investing in Africa to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development, the Deputy Secretary-General addressed the Commission, after which the Chairman of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, His Royal Highness Prince Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands, also addressed the Commission.

135. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of China, Italy, South Africa, Sweden, Guinea, the Czech Republic, Zimbabwe and France, as well as by the observers for Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Nigeria, Benin, Mauritius, Brazil, the Marshall Islands (on behalf of the small island developing States of the Pacific that are Members of the United Nations), Algeria, Mali, Namibia and Norway.

136. A statement was made by the representative of ECA.

137. Statements were also made by the representatives of the following major groups: farmers; workers and trade unions; local authorities; women; and non-governmental organizations.

138. At the high-level round-table meeting on interlinkages among the thematic issues, including adaptation to climate change in the context of sustainable development, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs made a statement.

139. An interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of China, South Africa, India, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Italy, Israel, Indonesia and the United States of America, as well as by the observers for Botswana, Montenegro, Argentina, Guyana, Ghana, Greece, Nigeria, Switzerland, Tonga, Mozambique and Bangladesh.

140. A statement was made by the representative of the European Community.

141. A statement was made by the representative of WMO.

142. A statement was made by the representative of ESCWA.

143. Statements were also made by the representatives of the following major groups: scientific and technological communities; children and youth; and business and industry.

144. At its 18th meeting, on 15 May, the Commission held an interactive discussion with United Nations organizations, the regional commissions and the specialized agencies and Bretton Woods institutions, to which the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs made an introductory statement.

145. At the same meeting, statements were made by Michel Jarraud, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization; Achim Steiner, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme; Luc Gnacadja, Executive Director, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; Andrey V. Pirogov, Assistant Director-General and Executive Director, World Health Organization (WHO) Office at the United Nations; Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Director-General, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources; Philip Dobie, Director, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Deborah Saidy, Director, World Food Programme (WFP) New York Liaison Office; Cheryl Morden, Director, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) North American Liaison Office; Josue Dione, Director, ECA (also on behalf of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission on Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and ESCWA); Axumite Gebre-Egziabher, Director, UN-Habitat, New York Office; and Kseniya Lvovsky, representative of the World Bank.

146. Also the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of China, France and Senegal, as well as by the observers for Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union) and Namibia.

147. Also at its 18th meeting, the Commission held an interactive discussion with major groups, to which the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs made an introductory statement.

148. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: women; children and youth; indigenous people; non-governmental organizations; local authorities; workers and trade unions; business and industry; scientific and technological communities; and farmers.

149. Also at the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), the United States of America, the Netherlands and South Africa, as well as by the observers for Ireland, Malawi, Brazil, Benin and

Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union).

150. At its 19th meeting, on 15 May, the Commission continued to hear the ministerial statements on the topic, "The way forward", during which statements were made by Adou Mohamed Ali, Permanent Mission of Djibouti to the United Nations (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States); Joseph Puxeu, Secretary of State for Rural Areas and Water, Spain; Nasser Pangandaman, Secretary, Department of Agrarian Reform, Philippines; Batilda Salha Burian, Minister of State for the Environment, United Republic of Tanzania; Luis de Assunçao Pedro da Mota Liz, Vice-Minister of Urbanism and Environment, Angola; Meena Gupta, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, India; Romel Alaric García, Vice-Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Guatemala; Daniel A. Reifsnyder, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environment, United States of America; Rolf Erikson, State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Sweden; Alcinda Abreu, Minister for the Coordination of Environmental Action, Mozambique; Bradford M. Machila, Minister of Lands, Zambia; Roberto Alfonso Escalante Caceros, Vice-Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, El Salvador; Rokhaya Sene, Director-General of Planning, Senegal; Mary-Jeanne Adler, Director for Emergency Situation Management, Environment and Sustainable Development, Romania; Faris Al-Junaidi, Secretary-General, Ministry of the Environment, Jordan; J. Choikhand, Director, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Nature and Environment, Mongolia; Piragibe dos Santos Tarragô, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations; Essowe Ouro-Djeri, Cabinet Director, Ministry of Environment, Tourism and Forest Research, Togo; Lene Jensen, Head of Department, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Denmark; Illalkamar Ag Oumar, Chef de Cabinet, Ministry of the Environment and Health, Mali; Felix Ani Aniokoye, Deputy Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations; Peter Maurer, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations; Saviour F. Borg, Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations; Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz, Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations; Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations; Hjálmar Hannesson, Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations; Adiyatwidi Adiwoso Asmady, Chargé d'affaires a.i., and Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations; Fernando Berguño, Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations; Yukio Takasu, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations; Gilles Noghès, Permanent Representative of Monaco to the United Nations; Solveiga Silkalna, Permanent Representative of Latvia to the United Nations; and Dmitry Maksimychev, Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations.

151. At its 20th meeting, on 16 May, the Commission continued to hear ministerial statements on the topic, "The way forward", during which statements were made by Harry Liiv, Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of Environment, Estonia, James L. Ole Kiyiapi, Head of Delegation, Kenya; María Rubiales de Chamorro, Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations; Hamid Chabar, Deputy Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations; Jairo Montoya, Chargé d'affaires and Deputy Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations; Jorge Argüello, Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations; Mohammed Khazaee, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to

the United Nations; Margaret Mukahanana-Sangarwe, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Zimbabwe; Madhuban Prasad Paudel, Deputy Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations; Nurbek Jeenbaev, Permanent Representative of Kyrgyzstan to the United Nations; Paulette Bethel, Permanent Representative of the Bahamas to the United Nations; Dean Merrilees, Minister Counsellor, Agriculture, Australia; Claude Heller, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations; Negash Kebret Botora, Ambassador/Chargé d'affaires a.i., and Deputy Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations; Jan Henderson, Director, Environment Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand; María Fernanda Espinosa, Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations; Tapiwa Sue Mongwa, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Botswana to the United Nations; Aura Mahuampi Rodríguez de Ortiz, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations; Alpha Ibrahima Sow, Permanent Representative of Guinea to the United Nations; Hugo Siles Alvarado, Permanent Representative of Bolivia to the United Nations; Olivier Belle, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations; Andrzej Towpik, Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations; Paolo Soprano, Division Director, Ministry of Environment, Italy; Andrei Dapkiunas, Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations; Georgette Koko, Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, Nature Conservation and Disaster Prevention and Management, Gabon; Gonzalo Guillén, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Peru to the United Nations; Sirodjidin M. Aslov, Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations; Jasem Ibrahim J. M. Al-Najem, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Kuwait to the United Nations; Mohammed A. A. Alahraf, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations; Navin Chandarpal, Adviser to the President on Sustainable Development, Guyana; Youcef Yousfi, Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations; Akec K. A. Khoc, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations; Jean-Marie Ehouzou, Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations; and Bassam Darwish, Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations.

152. A statement was made by Ammar Hijazi, representative of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations.

153. A statement was also made by Celestino Migliore, observer for the Holy See.

154. A statement was made by Luca Dall'Oglio, observer for the International Organization for Migration.

155. A statement was made by Candice Stevens, Sustainable Development Adviser, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

156. At its 21st meeting, on 16 May, the Commission continued its consideration of the topic, "The way forward", and heard statements by Alemneh Dejene, Senior Officer, Climate Change and Bioenergy Division, FAO; and Remigio Martin Maradona, representative of the Intergovernmental Institution for the Use of Micro-Alga Spirulina Against Malnutrition

D. Chairman's summary

157. At the 15th meeting, on 13 May, the Chairman introduced part one of the summary of the discussion.

158. Statements were made by the representatives of Australia, Mexico, Canada, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), as well as by the observers for Mali, Benin, Norway, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Togo, Malaysia, Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union) and Mauritius.

159. Statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: business and industry; and children and youth.

160. At the 17th meeting, on 14 May, a statement was made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China).

161. At the 21st meeting, on 16 May, the Chairman introduced part two of the summary of the discussion.

162. Statements were made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Mexico, India, Australia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Thailand, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Russian Federation and South Africa, as well as by the observers for Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Switzerland, Namibia, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Egypt.

163. The Chairman's summary reads as follows:

Part one
Review of thematic issues

I. Opening of the session

1. The substantive part of the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development was opened on 5 May 2008 by the Chairman, Francis Nhema, Minister of Environment and Tourism, Zimbabwe. In his opening statement, the Chairman emphasized that the thematic cluster for the 2008-2009 cycle — agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification, and Africa — was of crucial importance to achieving sustainable development goals. The issues under discussion were complex and interlinked, and therefore needed to be addressed in an integrated manner. In examining those issues, attention should be paid to such issues as a fair international trading system and improved market access for developing countries, as well as the need for a real partnership that would assist Africa in reaching the internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Millennium Development Goals. The ongoing food crisis highlighted the urgency of the Commission's agenda, as high and rising food prices worsened

hunger and malnutrition for hundreds of millions of people and threatened to reverse progress towards achievement of the Goals. The Chairman reiterated the importance of major groups in those efforts, and called upon all countries to work together to make the present session a success.

2. In considering the proposal on the organization of work of the session, the Chairman pointed out that the arrangement for the day of discussions devoted to small island developing States was a compromise solution and should not be interpreted as constituting a precedent for such future reviews. He expressed his thanks to member States for the flexibility that they had demonstrated in resolving the scheduling difficulty. The observer for Grenada (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Alliance of Small Island States) emphasized that the Commission was committed to the review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States ("Barbados Programme of Action") and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States ("Mauritius Plan for Implementation") and that, as such, the review should be given importance equal to that of the other topics discussed by the Commission. He expressed support for the Chairman's view that the current working arrangement for the day did not set a precedent.

3. In his opening remarks, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs noted that, in recent years, there had been strong growth in the world economy and if that growth continued and its benefits were widely shared, there was reason to be optimistic that millions more people would emerge from poverty. He highlighted major challenges in the themes to be considered at the current session, emphasizing in particular the rise in world food prices, slow growth in agricultural production and the impact of climate change on agriculture, especially on the livelihoods of people living in drylands. He underlined the extraordinary challenges that Africa continued to face on its road towards sustainable development and the need for an African green revolution. Emphasizing the vulnerability of small island developing States, he underlined that greater investment in the expansion and diversification of the rural economy of those States and the development of stronger intersectoral linkages among agriculture, fisheries and other sectors of the economy would be important in building resilience. Regarding the review of the decisions on water and sanitation taken by the Commission at its thirteenth session, he pointed to the mixed results in achieving objectives: by 2015 the world may meet the water target but not the sanitation target.

4. The outcomes of intersessional events held between September 2007 and April 2008 as contributions to the Commission's sixteenth session were presented by delegates of the Governments that had organized the events (for the reports, see http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/esd16/intersessional.htm).

II. Overall review: general statements

5. The President of Worldwatch Institute, Christopher Flavin, gave a keynote speech to introduce the session. He presented some thoughts based on the report, *State of the World 2008*, which focused on innovations for a

sustainable economy. He stressed that, unless a sustainable economy was achieved, the current trends of a crisis in food and energy would continue and would deepen as many developing countries increased their resource consumption and per capita consumption in developed countries remained high. To reverse the current trends, a strong political commitment was necessary so that investment in agriculture was increased and new approaches were adopted, in particular, empowering small farmers to take on new technologies in sustainable agriculture. He also stressed the importance of new energy technologies, especially renewable energy. Commitments to renewable energy were accelerating and countries which were presently at the forefront would be the most successful in the future. It was important to ensure that developing countries were not left behind in the development and use of those technologies. The current challenges needed to be met by a global community.

6. In their general statements, delegations expressed their satisfaction with the reports submitted by the Secretary-General to the Commission and with the Commission on Sustainable Development matrix which was considered a useful way of organizing information and sharing good practices; it was, however, mentioned that the matrix needed to be further developed to ensure that it remained relevant and useful, particularly for developing countries. Some delegations also highlighted the regional implementation meetings, as well as the work of the regional commissions.

7. Delegations stressed that an open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system was needed so that all countries, including developing countries, could attain sustained economic growth and food security. They called for the successful and timely conclusion of the stalled negotiations on agriculture in the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations.

8. Many speakers welcomed the consideration of Africa as a special theme in the current thematic cycle, but also emphasized that it should remain as a cross-cutting issue on the agenda of all sessions of the Commission. They underlined the enormous challenges facing the continent in its efforts to achieve sustainable development, especially in the thematic areas under review. Effective sectoral partnerships with development partners were necessary, including through such regional development initiatives as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

9. Many speakers highlighted the particular conditions and special needs of the developing countries, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, the small island developing States, the least developed countries and the landlocked developing countries.

10. Many delegations emphasized the importance of the review of water and sanitation, stating that integrated water resources management with strong stakeholder participation and a gender and pro-poor perspective was a key instrument in promoting balanced development through the integration of water considerations in other sectoral policies.

11. It was stressed that poverty eradication remained a global priority and an overarching objective of sustainable development and that it would not be achieved unless sustainable agriculture and rural development were realized and the efforts to combat drought and desertification were scaled up through

changing production and consumption patterns and reducing deforestation and forest degradation.

12. Many delegations cited the need for additional financial resources, the transfer of technology and know-how and capacity-building — that is, the means of implementation — as the most crucial cross-cutting issues for sustainable development. They called on the international community to fulfil its commitments in those areas, including the Monterrey commitments. It was pointed out that, according to recent figures, development aid had decreased in 2006 and again in 2007.

13. Among the most cited concerns were the food crisis and the food price increases. Many speakers mentioned the deleterious effects on poor populations and the risk of a swift reversal of progress in reducing poverty and hunger. The importance of finding long-term solutions to structural problems in food and agriculture was mentioned by many as a core topic for the work of the current session. At the same time, some delegations expressed appreciation for the creation by the Secretary-General of a high-level task force to address the food crisis.

14. Many delegations emphasized the need for profound change in the agricultural system. Agricultural productivity had to increase to meet the long-term rising trend in demand for food. Investment in the sector needed to increase. At the same time, agriculture needed to be made more sustainable. Agricultural practices must change, and efforts made to improve land and soil management. Effective means must be found so that advances in science and technology reached small farmers. Also, the paramount role of women in agriculture must be better recognized, and measures to boost productivity and sustainability must involve them.

15. Climate change and adaptation to climate change in relation to agriculture were mentioned by many speakers. Climate change was expected to affect water resources and to have a strong impact on drought and desertification. Climate change was, for some speakers, the most urgent challenge faced by African countries, the small island developing States and the least developed countries, the economies of which were dependent on activities affected by the weather. The need to help developing countries devise adaptation strategies through financial assistance, technology transfer and capacity-building was highlighted. Many delegations pointed out that the current level of funding in support of adaptation was far below the requirements of developing countries.

16. Speakers highlighted other cross-cutting issues, such as the need to address unsustainable production and consumption patterns, with developed countries taking the lead in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

17. Many delegations mentioned the challenges faced by those living under foreign occupation; concern was also expressed over the politicization of the deliberations of the Commission.

18. Some delegations stressed that the present session was a good opportunity to highlight the synergies among the Rio conventions and other relevant multilateral environment agreements and the implementation of

policies in related areas. In that regard, it was stressed that efforts to bring about such synergies should be done within the legal mandates of the conventions and agreements, while respecting the individual legal status of each. Others mentioned that, in dealing with the topics on the Commission's agenda, caution should be taken not to duplicate the work of existing dedicated organizations, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

III. Thematic discussions: agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa

A. Introduction

19. The present summary represents the views expressed during the interactive thematic discussions; it does not reflect a consensus. The interactive discussions benefited from the national reports submitted by member States, the reports of the Secretary-General, the outcomes of the regional implementation meetings and the presentations and active participation by panellists. Presentations of case studies during the sessions contributed to the interactive dialogue among participants. At the current review session, the Commission focused on identifying constraints and obstacles, as well as sharing of lessons learned and best practices. The review session provided a forum for sharing real world solutions, learning from each other and adapting solutions that contribute to sustainable livelihoods and poverty eradication.

20. The thematic focus on agriculture during the implementation cycle 2008-2009 was extremely timely and appropriate, given the current food crisis and the vital role that agriculture played in poverty and hunger reduction and the achievement of overall sustainable development. Participants expressed appreciation that agriculture was back on the agenda of the Commission. At the mid-way point to the 2015 target year to reach the Millennium Development Goals, the Commission, at its current session, was addressing the issue that was most critical for achieving the first Goal, that is, to halve global poverty and hunger, and that contributed directly to the achievement of the other Goals.

21. Speakers discussed the current food crisis and its long-term challenges; trends in agricultural production, consumption and prices; the impacts of climate change and high energy prices; and new factors, such as the demand for biofuels. It was also recognized that the review of agriculture could not be de-linked from the other components of the thematic cluster of issues under review, namely, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa: the Commission needed to take an integrated approach to the consideration of all those issues, within the context of sustainable development.

22. Rural development and agriculture had an important role to play in meeting the Millennium Development Goal on poverty and hunger. More than 70 per cent of the world's poor lived in rural areas and the rural poverty rate was more than double that of poverty in urban areas. Against the backdrop of the current food crisis, the world might not be able to meet that Goal, thus

making it more important than ever that poverty eradication be the central theme of rural development programmes and policies.

23. Land was one of the most important assets for the rural population. It provided a basis for livelihoods, a safety net from absolute poverty, and was a basis for social and economic relations in society. It also served as a source of cultural identity. Land provided important ecosystem services and was a crucial factor in mitigating and adapting to climate change. Land tenure security and equitable access to land and natural resources were central to sustainable development and poverty reduction.

24. Drought threatened the livelihoods of affected rural communities leading to food shortage and food insecurity. Drought contributed to declines in agricultural production, famine and population movements. The strong linkages among drought, agriculture, rural development and climate change were identified by many speakers. The developing world was particularly vulnerable to drought, especially in those regions dependent upon climate-sensitive economic sectors.

25. The projected climate change was likely to increase the frequency, severity and duration of drought events in many arid and semi-arid regions, with even greater and sustained negative impacts. The increasing frequency of the El Niño/La Niña phenomenon had led to a new climate pattern known as seasonal aridity or periodic drought, in addition to local droughts.

26. Desertification, the most serious form of land degradation, posed a threat to the achievement of progress in sustainable development, and to the eradication of poverty and hunger. It could set back the efforts of developing countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. It adversely affected mostly the poorest of the poor, depriving them of their land, the main source of their livelihood.

27. Desertification was a global problem that required a global response through concerted efforts among all Member States and concerned stakeholders. Therefore, international cooperation, including through global partnerships, technology transfer and enhanced scientific research, was required.

28. Over the past few years, many African countries had registered strong economic growth. Many positive developments had occurred that should not be overlooked or underestimated. For example, important efforts to reduce poverty, improve access to water and promote better governance had been undertaken. Access to primary and secondary education had improved markedly, as had access to health care and provision of treatment for HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

29. Africa was, however, still lagging behind in its progress towards sustainable development, including reaching the Millennium Development Goals. Challenges exist in agricultural productivity, infrastructural development, industrial competitiveness, the management of natural resources, the strengthening, including financing, of health-care systems and sustainable urban development, in such areas as resource efficiency, sustainable tourism, chemicals and waste management.

30. To achieve sustainable development in the areas under review, there was need for an enabling environment at all levels, good governance and institution- and capacity-building. There was a distinct need to strengthen scientific research and for education focused on solutions; there should be mechanisms for facilitating dialogue among scientists, decision makers and farmers, including through improved extension services so that information and solutions reach farmers, particularly small-scale farmers.

31. There was an urgent need to fully implement Agenda 21, the Rio principles and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as well as the international partnership for development called for in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. In that regard, it was noted that commitments from the international community in terms of official development assistance (ODA) had not been fully realized, and that ODA had declined in the past two years. Moreover, a significant portion of that ODA had taken the form of emergency aid and debt relief.

32. Many delegations noted external constraints on progress in the thematic areas under review, in particular with respect to the means of implementation.

B. Obstacles and constraints

1. Agriculture

33. Poverty, unsustainable use of natural resources and food security were interlinked issues that must be addressed in a coherent, integrated manner.

34. Rapidly rising prices of basic foods and growing scarcities of some food staples were developing into a global food crisis. Several factors had contributed to higher prices, including drought in some of the main producing regions, the reduction in global cereal stocks, the changing structure of demand towards more meat and dairy products, the increases in fuel prices and the growing demand for biofuels.

35. Agricultural productivity remained low in many countries and agriculture was often sidelined even though it should be considered a crucial sector in national, regional and international efforts to reduce hunger and poverty and improve rural livelihoods. Insufficient investment in the agricultural sector from both public and private sources, domestic and international, had been identified as a long-term constraint to increasing agricultural production.

36. Water scarcity, poor land and water management practices, the loss of arable land through desertification and increasing salinity of soils, rapidly rising prices of inputs and inadequate economic policies remained major obstacles to increasing agricultural productivity. The adoption of a holistic approach to agriculture was urged, with agricultural policies integrated into the national sustainable development agenda.

37. Climate change and climatic variability were negatively affecting agricultural production and land resources in some regions. The rise in sea levels and increasing temperatures particularly threatened the small island developing States. Agriculture, including aquaculture, and fisheries were

vulnerable to an increased frequency of natural disasters and the impacts of a changing climate on the hydrological cycle.

38. In contributing to food security, agriculture provided ecosystem services, such as soil conservation, climate regulation, water and biodiversity conservation. Sustaining productivity improvements while maintaining ecosystem services would depend on cultivation of arable land in a sustainable manner.

39. Many delegates highlighted the difficulties faced by subsistence farmers in achieving access to farm inputs and markets. The particular risks posed to small farmers by market fluctuations were also noted.

40. Despite agriculture being so important for the Africa region, access to food in the region continued to be limited. Subsistence farming, the lack of access to chemical inputs, credit and extension services, and climate variability severely limited the capacities of small farmers to enhance agricultural productivity. Many speakers renewed the call for a green revolution for Africa in order to boost agricultural production, increase economic growth and achieve food security in the region.

41. Delegations stressed the importance of an open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system and called for the successful and timely conclusion of the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations. Many delegations emphasized the importance of the development dimension in the Doha work programme and pointed out that the stalled negotiations in the Doha round were an impediment to agriculture production.

2. Rural development

42. Constraints to rural development were wide-ranging and varied in nature. They included: deficient rural development policies; lack of participation in decision-making by key stakeholders, such as women; and limited educational opportunities and inadequate access to information available to rural farmers to improve agricultural production techniques or to diversify their income through non-farming activities. Insufficient resources available to finance integrated rural development programmes had further impeded progress.

43. Investment trends in rural development were not favourable to meeting the current challenges, although many Governments had made efforts through national policies and programmes to reverse those trends. The share of ODA allocated to agriculture had gradually declined since the 1980s.

44. Lack of access to farming technologies, especially by small farmers, had also been an impediment to increasing agricultural productivity. Furthermore, small farmers had limited access to local markets and were more vulnerable to natural disasters and economic downturns. Constraints to pastoralists' livelihoods included restricted access to the key resources of pasture, water and through passage, thus increasing their vulnerability to herd loss owing to drought.

45. Lack of rural infrastructure and lack of access to infrastructure severely limited the flow of goods and services to the rural poor. Improving access to infrastructure, including transport and information and communications

technologies, and to energy, water and sanitation, and health care, and providing better opportunities for education and training to young people, particularly girls and women, were most needed in the rural areas.

3. Land

46. Pressure on scarce land resources was rising as a result of population growth, the increasing need for food, energy, water and raw materials, and expanding urban areas. Those pressures, combined with climate change patterns, were causing land degradation, including its desertification. Other factors contributing to land degradation included loss of arable land owing to urbanization, erosion or mechanisms that made the soil sterile. This had had negative effects on livelihoods, food production and environmental services derived from land. Soil productivity was decreasing throughout the world and there was no way of compensating for the loss. Many speakers stressed the need to reverse that trend.

47. Many developing countries had limited access to information technology and systems that could contribute to improved land management, planning and productivity. The problem of land use planning and management was further compounded by a lack of current data to assess the extent of land degradation and assess the quality of soils. Also, sustainable utilization of land, particularly in developing countries, was severely constrained by limited technical capacities.

48. The lack of access to land and the lack of transparent land policies prohibited access to other productive resources, thus not allowing poor people to escape the poverty trap. Limited financial, human, technical and institutional capacities were often cited as important constraints to providing secure land rights and advancing land reform.

49. Insecurity about land tenure also served as a serious obstacle to small-scale land users investing in their land, thereby limiting their possibilities to contribute to economic growth, sound land management practices and social inclusion. Poor and marginal groups, in particular indigenous peoples and women, often lacked secure land rights which had negative implications for poverty reduction. In many countries the failure to empower women also presented an obstacle to realizing the full potential of land resources. The important role women played in land management and food production was in many countries, not reflected in land titles, posing obstacles for women to keep their land and gain access to other productive resources.

50. Climate change would impact upon the availability of land and water and compound vulnerability, with the consequences being particularly severe in the small island developing States. At the same time, with sound land management practices, land could provide a sink for greenhouse gases, mitigate climate change and limit the negative consequences of land degradation. More balanced approaches to land management would help to resolve conflicts in achieving objectives.

4. Drought

51. Drought-affected communities often lacked both the financial and technical resources and the capacity-building support needed for effective drought management, which had had serious impacts on the level of resilience of those communities to drought.

52. Weak legislative frameworks to promote sustainable agricultural practices and lack of institutional capacity for implementation further weakened the capacity of local communities to deal with the impacts of drought.

53. The limited progress made in mobilizing long-term investments and stakeholder participation continued to constrain effective drought mitigation and adaptation in many affected developing countries and regions. In that regard, many speakers noted the need for a scaling up of financial and technical assistance by development partners.

54. The lack of reliable and timely forecasts and information available to local communities and of drought-monitoring systems and early warning capacities in affected developing countries and regions, particularly in Africa, seriously constrained their ability to undertake informed drought impact assessments. Difficulties were often encountered in data gathering and management at the relevant spatial scale, and in information-sharing at the national level.

55. Drought led to environmental degradation in a vicious cycle of soil exposure, erosion, land degradation and desertification, as well as to an increased risk of wildfires with consequent effects on atmospheric pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and loss of carbon dioxide sinks.

56. Drought management tended to be fragmented, with limited cooperation at the local, regional and international levels in regard to drought planning and management.

5. Desertification

57. Extreme and widespread rural poverty continued to be a main barrier to combating desertification. Africa and several other regions were facing challenges and constraints as a result of desertification. Unsustainable land use practices in the agricultural and pastoral sectors continued to lower the resilience of dryland ecosystems, rendering them increasingly vulnerable to land degradation and desertification.

58. Weak institutional and legal structures, poor coordination of collaboration among stakeholders across economic sectors, in particular the agricultural, natural resources management and land sectors, and lack of financial resources and technical capacities continued to hamper the implementation of focused and effective interventions to combat desertification. The lack of global monitoring and assessment meant that only fragmented information was available for combating desertification.

59. Lack of incentives to promote the sustainable use and management of rangelands, including the promotion of secure livelihoods in the pastoral

livestock sector, and lack of research programmes in effective stock breeding and management of pasture lands were also identified as constraints.

60. Inefficient water use in irrigated agriculture had added to the depletion of freshwater bodies and groundwater resources in many drylands. As water tables fell, salinity increased and water quality declined, with associated negative impacts on human and animal health, soil productivity and biodiversity.

61. The slow process of transfer, acquisition and adaptation of appropriate and affordable technologies, including water and soil conservation technologies, for growing climate-resilient and less water-intensive crops and improving land productivity and increasing agricultural production, continued to create difficulties for affected developing countries in addressing the adverse impacts of land degradation, desertification and drought.

62. Efforts to attract private sector investments in sectors relevant to desertification and drought often failed owing to the lack of financial incentives that could help secure profitable investment returns. Poverty and inadequate access to affordable credit facilities prevented local people from acquiring funding that they could profitably invest in measures to prevent land degradation and sustain their livelihoods.

63. Conflicts, wars and restricted access and use of land and other natural resources continued to aggravate the impacts of land degradation and desertification on livelihoods and ecosystems in some countries and regions.

64. Inadequate scientific research, education, data collection and monitoring and capacity posed constraints in developing countries since building resilience required in-depth knowledge of local area ecosystems, weather patterns, land use and demographic patterns.

65. Limited participation by local communities, indigenous peoples and other civil society groups in decision-making on policies to combat desertification hindered the effectiveness of such policies.

6. Africa

66. African economies depended heavily on the export of primary commodities, which contributed 80 per cent or more to the total export earnings of one half of the countries in Africa. Adoption of scientific and technological advances was low, as were foreign direct investment inflows. The combination of inadequate and underdeveloped physical infrastructure, especially that of transport and irrigation, and land degradation, desertification and climate change was a major barrier to reducing poverty, improving health and achieving food security.

67. The onset of the food crisis was threatening gains made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa: it reduced the affordability of food for the poor and led to diversion of budgetary resources from other priority needs. Urgent measures were needed to keep food affordable for the poor and to enable farmers faced with high inputs costs to plant their crops for the next growing season.

68. African staple crop yields were a mere fraction (roughly one fourth) of the world average. Long-term investments were needed to boost agricultural productivity. In many areas, soil nutrients were severely depleted, and fertilizer use remained very low. For poor farmers, fertilizers had become even less affordable in the light of high oil prices. Hence there was need to underline the importance of improved efficiency in fertilizer use and the use of other methods of enriching soil fertility, even as efforts were made to make fertilizers more accessible and affordable.

69. Improvements to farm-level productivity needed to be accompanied by a strengthening of other links of the agricultural supply (or value) chain, including efforts to ensure that farmers were able to market their surpluses at an attractive price. Regional trade integration could help, by permitting production of farm inputs at a scale economic for regional markets. However, intra-African trade continued to be hampered by trade barriers and poor cross-border infrastructure. Value chain actors were linked only weakly, and the access of farmers to market information was limited. Farmers, especially women farmers, often lacked secure land rights and access to credit.

70. The productivity and competitiveness of most industrial sectors were low, inhibiting the potential of Africa to move into higher value-added activities beyond bulk commodities. Low levels of private sector investment, weak domestic financial markets, lack of technological capacities and limited transfer of technologies were among the obstacles to economic diversification and industrial upgrading.

71. Poor health was one of the most common reasons for households to fall into poverty, or to be stuck there. Lack of access to affordable private health insurance or public health care was a major constraint to sustainable development in Africa. Low income, high pharmaceutical costs compared, for example, with South Asia, lack of data with which to develop insurance products and underdeveloped financial markets were among the constraints to the establishment of an affordable health-care system in Africa.

72. Africa continued to face constraints from the global trade system. The existing trade system might restrict access to markets of African agricultural products. Regional integration in Africa needed to be further strengthened. Besides reducing costs and expanding markets, regional integration might help African countries cope better with climate change. ECA, the African Union and NEPAD could play important roles in that regard.

73. Inadequate access to energy in Africa posed serious constraints to achieving sustainable development goals, including that of poverty eradication.

C. Lessons learned and best practices

1. Agriculture

74. With the expected increase in frequency of natural disasters, in particular droughts and floods, there was a need to increasing resilience and implement coping mechanisms in order to adapt to climate change. In that regard,

agricultural insurance schemes had proven successful in some countries in providing the necessary risk coverage.

75. With sustainable land management practices, agriculture could contribute to the mitigation of climate change by providing a sink for greenhouse gases and reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of agricultural production. Sustainable agricultural, forestry and natural resources management practices could increase productivity of scarce land resources and help protect watersheds.

76. Governments and major groups working in partnership had achieved promising results in the sustainable management of natural resources. Rural cooperatives had proven effective in aiding farmers to secure credit, increase productivity and expand their access to markets.

77. Efficient water resources development and management and reuse of safe wastewater could be key factors in increasing resilience to climatic changes and ensuring food security. Also, improved irrigation efficiencies and on-farm management practices could contribute towards overcoming water shortages and enhancing food security.

78. Information and communications technologies had proven to be useful tools for rural entrepreneurs and small-scale farmers. Such technologies facilitated access to market information and could enable farmers to obtain advice and training from e-extension services. Use of appropriate information and communications technologies in rural areas could also improve access to rural financial services, including credit, savings, payments and remittance receipts.

79. The use of food crops for producing biofuels had been a source of concern for many countries. However, biofuels could help overcome fossil fuel dependency and provide employment opportunities if their production met sustainability criteria.

80. Many speakers presented national or regional experiences in addressing the various challenges in their agricultural sectors. The experiences gained in Africa from the development and implementation of national food security strategies, as called for in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and regional plans of action, were highlighted.

2. Rural development

81. Among the activities that had assisted rural populations in improving their livelihoods were: organization of farming cooperatives to ensure that services were provided in rural areas; extension of training programmes to young people in rural areas, expanding their learning capabilities and encouraging them to invest in their own communities; development of agricultural micro-businesses; strengthening of national institutions to eradicate rural poverty; and investment in infrastructure, such as hospitals, roads and schools, in rural areas.

82. Providing support to small and medium-sized agro-industry enterprises in rural areas, backed by local and traditional knowledge and combined with the

most recent advances in science and technology, could contribute to rural employment and the diversification of rural economies.

83. Rural development challenges could only be overcome by the adoption of holistic and integrated approaches. However, those approaches would have to be developed within the local context. The adoption of decentralization policies had facilitated service provision to rural populations in some areas. The availability of energy and water services had been a source of growth for entrepreneurial activities.

84. Many rural communities had benefited from the national funds established to support rural development programmes. Improving agricultural productivity and enhancing access to physical and social infrastructure and services had proven to be important elements of successful rural development strategies. Tourism was considered to be one of the key non-farming activities that had the potential to lift the rural poor out of poverty.

3. Land

85. Integrated management of land and water resources that took into consideration all uses could increase land productivity, enhance resilience of farming systems and augment availability of water resources. Such an approach depended on good governance, a transparent land policy and the effective participation of stakeholders at all levels. Traditional knowledge could inform new approaches and technologies for sustainable land management. Agricultural techniques, such as conservation agriculture and zero tillage, had proven to be successful in many cases.

86. The scarcity of land resources had led some countries to devise policies to allocate land resources according to their greatest productive use and avoid the loss of agriculturally productive areas. The study of macroscale effects could help design a balanced use of land that avoided the competition of biofuel with food production and forested areas.

87. Secure access to land rights for communities or individuals, particularly marginalized groups, indigenous peoples and women, along with a transparent land administration system to control and manage land, had proven to be instrumental in supporting sustainable livelihoods and reducing poverty.

88. Tenure arrangements based on the principles of good governance and property rights were central to the sustainable management of natural resources, ensuring food security and welfare and reducing conflicts and poverty. Incentives to foster the sustainable management of land resources, such as payment for ecosystem services, had been successful in some countries. Land reforms which took into account cultural and customary rights had greater potential for success.

89. Relocating traditional landowners for the purpose of setting up new commercial interests could have serious negative consequences for food security and economic and social development. Social impact assessments could help in avoiding the relocation of landowners and finding alternatives.

90. Implementing the labour standards set by the International Labour Organization (ILO) could strengthen the rights of agricultural workers.

91. Strategic environmental assessments and environmental impact assessments are useful instruments for sustainable land use planning that could be utilized to identify potential environmental impacts. Such tools had proven effective in avoiding negative impacts and identifying suitable mitigation options. A dialogue between land planners and climate change experts might be useful in addressing the complex relationships among those issues.

92. Decentralization of land administration to the local level might help to promote good governance and management of natural resources, and transparent administration might also reduce corruption.

4. Drought

93. Employing a proactive approach to drought management had proven effective in reducing the risks and mitigating the effects of drought. Taking a proactive approach was even more urgent given current projections for climate change.

94. Drought was strongly linked with agriculture and land management. Strategies for drought management should incorporate issues of sustainable agriculture, soil conservation, crop diversification and integrated water management. The potential of soil protection as a means for climate change mitigation and adaptation should be further explored. Capacity-building and training were needed to fully implement such strategies.

95. Resilience-building was an important element of drought management. Evidence suggested that communities with well-established infrastructure and developed capacities for drought management were able to survive drought events without suffering widespread famine or economic collapse.

96. As droughts posed significant threats to crop production, the development and introduction of drought-tolerant crop varieties had become an important element of crop management under drought conditions. Further research on drought-tolerant varieties should be strongly encouraged.

97. Conservation and management of water resources in the water-stressed drylands were of utmost importance. Water recycling and reclamation could be an effective way of coping with the chronic water scarcity in dry areas. Attention should be paid to education and awareness-raising to change the perception of the public towards the consumption of reclaimed or recycled water. Special attention should be paid to the sustainable use of deep groundwater resources. There was also scope for increasing efficiency in rainwater harvesting and in irrigated agriculture.

98. Improved access to appropriate and affordable agricultural technologies and corresponding field training were important for increasing food production and growing drought-tolerant crops while maintaining soil productivity.

99. Drought had also become an important risk factor that affected the investment decisions of agricultural producers and financial institutions working with farmers. Index-based weather insurance represented an emerging innovative market scheme for managing the risks associated with drought.

100. The importance of adopting an integrated approach to providing reliable and timely climate information and weather forecasts was widely recognized.

Evidence suggested that the economic, social and environmental damages associated with drought events could be reduced if climate information and weather forecasts were taken into account in drought adaptation and mitigation.

101. Increased investments in measures related to early warning, including the establishment of early warning systems, would be crucial. Such investments would make it possible to improve drought forecasting so as to better support local communities in coping with drought events. In that regard, the importance of the access of rural communities to early warning systems was highlighted.

102. Many speakers highlighted the value of traditional knowledge in drought adaptation and drought mitigation. For example, the time-tested, drought-combating strategies of indigenous peoples were recognized as a sound drought adaptation method. Other examples included traditional methods of water management and conservation, and rainwater catchments and storage.

5. Desertification

103. The integration of national action programmes to combat desertification into national development frameworks, when supported by strong institutional capacities, could lead to their effective implementation. Incorporating the priorities identified in the strategies and programmes into the national budget helped to mobilize the required financial resources and their alignment with identified priorities. Decentralization of actions to the local level, empowerment of local stakeholders, in particular women, and partnerships, including public-private partnerships, could contribute to progress in implementation. Regional cooperation should also be encouraged.

104. Experience suggested that communal land ownership systems often did not encourage farmers to invest in sustainable land management practices. On the other hand, the allocation of land to individual farmers had been an incentive to farmers to invest in agriculture and soil conservation, which increased both agricultural production and the value of the land.

105. Some speakers highlighted good practices in providing loans for the sustainable management of pasture lands and better management of water resources and in making available targeted subsidies and insurance during times of drought.

106. Community-based natural resources management, including on-farm and community forestry and soil and water conservation, had proved beneficial for farmers.

107. Building on the traditional knowledge that local communities and indigenous peoples had developed in their interaction with nature over time had proven to be an effective means of self-help in addressing desertification and drought, for example, in rainwater harvesting, including through the use of underground reservoirs or cisterns in arid areas, and biodiversity conservation. Promoting that kind of knowledge should also ensure that local communities and indigenous peoples benefited directly from its commercial use.

108. Increased interaction among scientists, policymakers and local communities could accelerate the dissemination and adaptation of new and emerging technologies and corresponding knowledge from laboratories to field application in developing countries, with the assistance of development partners.

109. The establishment of indicators facilitated regular evaluation of improvements in land use management and the impact of those improvements on agriculture and ecosystems.

6. Africa

110. African institutions were strongly committed to the eradication of poverty, which had been adopted by the African Union as a core mandate. Many countries had adopted national strategies to reduce poverty and policies to promote good governance. NEPAD provided a consistent and concrete framework for achieving sustainable development in Africa while reflecting African priorities. NEPAD provided capacity-building, reinforced regional and subregional cooperation, promoted better regional governance and provided support for the implementation of the NEPAD environment initiative. Partnerships with other countries and regions had resulted in increased cooperation on sustainable development issues, including the Millennium Development Goals.

111. African countries shared many common sustainable development challenges, whether situated north or south of the Sahara. Such challenges included water scarcity, land degradation, drought and desertification. There was thus scope for sharing of experience and for cooperation across the continent.

112. In respect of agriculture, African Governments had committed themselves to achieving significant objectives, notably those of the NEPAD Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme. Those objectives included that of devoting at least 10 per cent of national budgets to agriculture and rural development, as stated in the Maputo Declaration on agriculture and food security and the Abuja Declaration on fertilizers.

113. Energy was a key factor in industrial development, including rural agro-processing and other industries. Many African countries had been addressing that issue and had started ambitious programmes to address their power deficits. A number of partnerships had contributed to those efforts. User-owned electricity cooperatives had proven to be an effective model in some countries for extending access to electricity to rural areas.

114. A number of positive experiences had occurred in the area of agriculture and the fight against desertification. Within the framework of the NEPAD Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme and in furtherance of commitments made in the Maputo Declaration, African Governments were increasing their funding for agriculture and were designing, together with development partners and regional economic communities, comprehensive agricultural development programmes at the country and regional levels based on most recent scientific evidence. Adopting an integrated and comprehensive approach to investments in agriculture, which

included improved policy, technology and links to markets, could increase productivity and trade, with a direct impact on rural incomes, and reduce hunger and poverty. The NEPAD Programme provided a comprehensive framework for that effort.

115. Pilot projects and projects for training and capacity-building had been implemented in various countries, focusing, for example, on extension services, input supply, provision of credit and other support to small-scale farmers and sustainable farming techniques, such as drip irrigation or natural methods aimed at limiting the use of insecticides and fertilizers. Public agricultural research institutions had helped in the development of improved varieties, in standardization and in the promotion of new end-uses and markets for African staple crops. Pilot programmes had also encompassed insurance schemes for farmers, livestock herders and other actors in the agricultural value chain. Interest in such schemes was growing as one possible way to protect farmers and herders from the effects of climate change.

116. The experience of one country in rapidly boosting its agricultural sector suggested the effectiveness of the targeted and timely supply by government of affordable inputs to small farmers, working through private sector agro-dealers to distribute the inputs. Government support provided to smallholders for the adoption of high-yielding varieties of staple and cash crops had also met with some success.

117. Some African countries had had a positive experience in reversing land degradation, for example, through reforestation of fallow land. This was a relatively low-cost method of regenerating depleted soils. With government and donor support, locally managed enterprises could strengthen local forest product value chains and generate valuable revenue for the community.

118. Tourism had the potential to become an important economic sector in Africa. Sustainable tourism, including community-based and eco-tourism, could be an important complement to sustainable management of natural resources. Experience in West and southern Africa showed how countries could cooperate in the joint management of parks and other valuable ecosystems that traversed national boundaries. Communal land conservancies had proven to be an effective approach to wildlife-based tourism in southern Africa. The World Tourism Organization could play an important role in providing technical assistance in the area of sustainable tourism.

119. Interesting experience relevant for Africa could be drawn from other developing countries. Models of village knowledge networks could be relevant for Africa in developing new platforms for extension services, research, and farmer linkages. Small island developing States of the Pacific would be eager to share knowledge on water harvesting and would be keen to open a dialogue with African countries.

120. Important progress had been made in building infrastructure, in part thanks to South-South and North-South cooperation. The multiplication of exchanges among African countries and between them and Asian and Latin American countries, as well as with development partners, contributed to the dissemination of best practices and the use of new technology.

D. Means of implementation

121. Investments in research and development, particularly in innovative and sustainable agricultural technologies and infrastructure, were urgently required. In that regard, measures to enhance the dissemination and transfer of new and innovative agricultural technologies to developing countries were necessary. The international community should step up support to investments in agriculture and substantially increase ODA in support of international research and on-the-ground outreach, training and extension services in agriculture, including those offered by the Consultative Group on Agricultural Research (CGIAR) system.

122. A successful and timely conclusion of the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations would help to address many of the current challenges in the agriculture sector, bringing concrete benefits to farmers in developing countries.

123. The important role of stakeholders, especially farmers and agricultural workers, in achieving agricultural development was highlighted. Agricultural workers were seen to be underpaid and undervalued. Addressing the special needs of women farmers was considered essential.

124. Appropriate and environmentally sound production and distribution of seeds were essential for sustainable agriculture. Greater use of organic farming and traditional food crops was encouraged.

125. Development and use of genetically modified seeds that were pest, disease and drought-resistant needed to be explored on the basis of proper research, while fully taking into account their still-unknown effects.

126. Providing information and advice to small-scale farmers about sustainable farming practices would help them to increase agricultural production and escape the poverty trap. Similarly, providing technical support to small enterprises could help them to remain competitive.

127. Investing in rural infrastructure and social services was viewed as an effective way to eradicate poverty. Also, creating economic opportunities through modern technologies and small-scale industrial development was noted as important for generating non-farm employment in rural areas.

128. There was a need for adequate investment in sustainable land management and tenure security. More resources needed to be made available to enable national and local governments to advance land reform and secure land access. Increasing the allocation of financial resources to land management projects would also help in improving land management and land productivity.

129. Systems and technologies that increased land productivity and addressed challenges in land titling had been developed by developing and developed countries and could be shared as part of South-South and North-South cooperation.

130. Good governance, transparency and capacity-building were viewed as prerequisites for strengthening the institutional and legal framework for the administration of land. Strengthening capacities in administrative procedures

and development of information systems was needed to establish a system of secure land rights, taking into account specific national circumstances.

131. Scaling up the allocation of financial resources to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) focal area of land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation, in the forthcoming replenishment cycle should unlock new and additional funding from GEF. Some countries considered that the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification should be reviewed and reformed in a direction that allowed it to play a complementary role to GEF in providing and mobilizing resources for the elaboration and implementation of action programmes.

132. Access to space technologies and their applications, including systems of earth observation, meteorological satellites and communications, as well as satellite navigation systems for the monitoring and evaluation of the environment, allowed for better monitoring and mapping of desertification processes and drought events. Capacity-building in the utilization of space technologies and their application improved the knowledge base as regards drought management, climate change adaptation and crop forecasting, including the prediction of harvest schedules.

133. A variety of estimates have been made of Africa's investment needs in the coming years. By one estimate, roughly $6 billion a year would be needed for the construction of rural infrastructure. The European Union had announced that, by 2010, it expected that one half of its ODA would be destined for Africa, which would translate (at the current exchange rate) into an additional $10 billion a year.

134. There was a need for a reinforced development partnership with Africa, beginning with the honouring of international commitments on ODA. New and additional resources needed to be channelled to the continent. Existing initiatives, such as the new Asia-Africa partnership, needed to be strengthened.

135. While there had been significant debt relief in recent years, a further extension of such relief could have significant economic and social benefits. Foreign direct investment also needed to be increased. Access to capital by small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurs through innovative business loans and microcredit financing should be strengthened.

136. Capacity-building and transfer of technologies, in accordance with the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, and technical cooperation and partnership were needed. There was a particular need for support in capacity-building to be provided to local communities and indigenous peoples.

137. Increased ODA and public investment in infrastructure, notably in rural areas, would be critical to boosting African farmers' incomes and agricultural value added. Increased investment in research and development, development of local seed companies and provision of support for extension services in African countries would also be needed. Capacity-building was needed to support the NEPAD strategy on industrial development. Greater efforts were needed to attract investment into the processing of Africa's natural resources, including agro-processing, and the local or regional production of agricultural inputs.

138. Many delegations stressed the importance of strengthening trade capacity, increasing productive capacity and enhancing competitiveness if Africa were to benefit fully from international trade. Priority attention needed to be given to strengthening trade capacity, including through delivery of effective aid-for-trade.

E. Interlinkages and cross-cutting issues

139. No single thematic issue could be addressed in isolation. There were significant interlinkages among the thematic issues of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. Addressing the interlocking relationships among the thematic and cross-cutting issues through an integrated approach, which included the promotion of partnerships at all levels and bringing together multiple stakeholders, was essential to achieving long-term progress.

140. It was recognized that there remained inequalities in consumption patterns within and among countries. Pursuing sustainable patterns of consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, was essential to making progress in that important area.

141. Gender had been a prominent cross-cutting issue for the current cycle of work of the Commission. Gender inequality had proven to be a constraint to growth and poverty reduction. Women working in the agricultural sector in particular tended to be invisible workers, and most of the income from agricultural activities went to men. Women farmers lacked training, access to credit, access to markets and market chains. Empowering women should be given priority attention by governments.

142. Young people, particularly those in rural areas, needed alternative livelihood opportunities and must be empowered to contribute to sustainable development.

143. National sustainable development strategies had proven to be successful in many developed and developing countries. They enhanced the consistency of comprehensive and sectoral plans and facilitated the integration of cross-cutting issues into sectoral strategies. In some developing countries, the implementation of national plans and efforts had resulted in the achievement of significant progress towards sustainable development, greater economic resilience, lower energy intensities and lower energy costs per unit of production or consumption, with corresponding environmental and social benefits.

144. A number of countries had established mechanisms for the review of national strategies for sustainable development and shared learning, which offered a promising way to further advance the implementation of such strategies and the fulfilment of the commitments set out in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

145. Public-private partnerships, including those launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, had proven important in enhancing sustainable development, including through the promotion of multi-

stakeholder involvement, the mobilization of resources and the facilitation of technology transfer and diffusion. The private sector could play an important role in increasing agricultural production and promoting rural development.

146. Enhancement of capacity-building was of paramount importance, particularly for rural and remote areas. Lack of knowledge, appropriate legislation and institutional infrastructure, and weakness in educational systems and human resources development continued to affect adversely ongoing efforts to promote agricultural productivity, facilitate rural development and combat desertification and land degradation.

147. Scientific solutions were critical to increasing agricultural productivity. Investment in science and technology, training, capacity-building and information-sharing were important for addressing long-term constraints. Science and technology in other domains, including the application of space technologies, could play an important role, for example, in monitoring land use changes. The international community was encouraged to provide support in those areas.

F. Continuing challenges

148. With over 850 million people already suffering from chronic hunger, the current escalation in food prices was causing millions more of the poor to go hungry. Food aid needs were critical, while the costs of supplying food aid were also rising. Meeting that challenge would require both short and long-term action. Meeting the additional food aid requirements through the mobilization of additional funds from the international community was an immediate priority.

149. Mobilizing long-term investments in infrastructure, through both domestic resources and ODA, providing incentives to the private sector to invest in agriculture and livestock production, and building the capacities of land users, in particular local communities, women and young people, remained a continuing task.

150. There was a need to create new strategic partnerships in the agricultural sector and to increase investments in agricultural research and development. The international community should support technology transfer and capacity-building in the agricultural sector. New platforms for extension services, research and farmer linkages were needed. Investments in information and communications technologies in rural areas would be critical to increasing the access of farmers to market and technical information. In that respect, implementation of the recommendations of the World Summit on the Information Society would achieve much.

151. There was an urgent and continuing need to diversify the rural economy with the objective of providing additional opportunities for the rural labour force and reducing the disparities in the quality of life and access to services between urban and rural areas. In that context, rural development programmes must be aimed at creating new jobs and income opportunities outside the agricultural sector. Activities such as environmentally sound, small-scale mining and forest conservation and management offered the potential for

diversifying the rural economy. However, each opportunity for rural development needed to be tailored to the particular rural setting.

152. Rural economies, including agriculture, largely depended upon natural resources which in many cases were over-exploited. In that regard, unsustainable use of land and water resources posed a serious threat to the sustainability of rural economies, especially those which were agro-based. Increasing levels of land degradation and desertification further limited the possibility of meeting the food security objective. Thus, feeding the growing population would continue to be a major challenge.

153. Improving and sustaining the livelihoods of such vulnerable groups as women, children, seniors, nomadic pastoralists, indigenous peoples, disabled people and people living in very remote areas who were constantly threatened by land degradation, water scarcity and climate change remained a great challenge. Meeting that challenge called for targeted support measures; women could play an important role in implementing those measures as agents of change.

154. In a context of increased global competition for land, the poorest sections of society, often including landless people, women, pastoralists, indigenous peoples, tenant farmers and farm labourers, were the least able to compete. Many such land users lived on common property lands and did not have clear tenure rights, which left them particularly vulnerable to dispossession.

155. Unsustainable land use practices presented a serious threat to sustainable development. In that regard, the uncontrolled expansion of human settlements posed not only a challenge for sustainable land use planning and management but might lead to reduced food production in some countries.

156. Many delegations stressed the important role of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in combating land degradation and desertification and in mitigating the effects of drought, and highlighted the need for its full implementation. The Convention, as the only legally binding, universal agreement on land issues that systematically addressed land degradation and desertification, offered a platform for adaptation, mitigation and resilience and could therefore reinforce the measures intended to address the adverse impacts of climate change and the loss of biodiversity. Synergies among the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification should be promoted, while respecting the individual mandates of each as separate legal instruments.

157. The provision of funds to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which was the most underfunded of the Rio conventions, remained of great concern. The recently adopted 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance its implementation (2008-2018) had opened a way for renewed commitment to, and effective implementation of, the Convention at all levels.

158. There was scope for improving agricultural production while maintaining soil productivity, including by enhancing efficiency in irrigation, by rainwater harvesting and undertaking further research on and introducing drought-tolerant crops and seeds. Aligning grazing strategies with the carrying capacity

of pastures could yield effective results in regard to the rehabilitation of degraded grasslands.

159. The identification of hot spots, including the starting points of sandstorms, and the establishment of systems to warn people of sand dune movement and dust storms remained vital in desert areas.

160. Projected climate change was likely to exacerbate problems of water shortage and water quality in many water-stressed regions. As pressure on water supplies continued to increase, more frequent and severe droughts were a matter of concern in both watershort and watersurplus regions. This called for a comprehensive response in respect of climate change mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and finance.

161. Increased attention and resources must be given to drought monitoring and early warning, including the establishment of systems and networks. There was a particular need for improving the access of developing countries to accurate and updated climate and meteorological information.

162. The knowledge base for combating and controlling desertification and managing drought needed to be strengthened, including through provision of support to scientific research, data collection and monitoring initiatives with the aim of developing a globally shared and affordable monitoring and reporting system.

163. Achieving gender equality was important in accelerating sustainable development. Among the possible actions for implementation were: mobilizing professional women in agriculture, including through affirmative action aimed at the inclusion of women in training programmes; ensuring that resource flows benefited African women; building capacity in relevant institutions dealing with agriculture with a view to ensuring gender sensitivity; providing incentives to small-scale women farmers to accelerate the transition to more sustainable practices; and training women in the maintenance of agricultural equipment.

164. The resources available for post-conflict reconstruction were insufficient and unpredictable. A more adequate framework to accompany reconstruction in post-conflict countries and increased ODA were needed.

165. The international community should scale up support for the implementation of various programmes under the auspices of NEPAD.

166. Regional trade in Africa needed to be strengthened. Stronger regional trade and broader economic integration would benefit not only agriculture but also the sectors producing agricultural inputs and other agricultural goods. However, it was difficult to embark on regional integration without regional transport infrastructure.

167. Further efforts to extend and improve the quality of education in Africa were important, as were efforts to strengthen health-care systems, including health financing and insurance. The large and growing numbers of AIDS orphans in some countries made the challenge of providing adequate education and health care for children and young people all the more challenging.

168. Since national sustainable development strategies were processes that cut across all levels (local, national, regional and international) and sectors and involved multiple actors from all major stakeholders, countries continued to face challenges in implementing national strategies for sustainable development. Increased exchange of learning experiences and increased support for capacity-building were essential for addressing those challenges.

169. Promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns needed to be given a higher priority, in particular in developed countries. Policies and programmes for advancing sustainable production and consumption would need to be placed in the context of sustainable development.

170. Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples would further efforts to achieve sustainable development goals.

171. There was scope for the organizations of the United Nations development system to work together to address the continuing challenges in the thematic cluster of issues.

IV. Regional discussions

Introduction

172. Five regional discussions were organized to provide the opportunity for presentation of the outcomes of the regional implementation meetings, each followed by an interactive dialogue between delegates and regional panellists, including prominent governmental and non-governmental experts, representatives of regional commissions and other regional partners, which focused on identifying region-specific barriers and constraints, lessons learned and best practices in relation to the thematic cluster of issues under review.

Africa

173. Participants emphasized that accelerating progress in relation to the thematic cluster of issues under review was critical to sustainable development in Africa. The interlinked and interrelated nature of the issues, including their linkages with climate change and food security, was also noted. It was stressed that Africa was the continent with the largest percentage of people living in poverty and vulnerable to climate change, and that improving agricultural productivity and strengthening rural development were key to overcoming poverty in Africa.

174. The multifaceted nature of the challenges in the African region meant that some problems could be addressed at the national level, while others required the adoption of regional initiatives. Participants gave examples of the national and regional initiatives being undertaken to overcome barriers and constraints in relation to the issues under review. A number of delegations underlined the importance of NEPAD and called for increased support for its programmes and activities. The important role of regional communities was recognized and the need to strengthen donor support for regional institutions was emphasized.

175. Participants underlined that land tenure and land ownership, including that of women, remained among the key issues for African countries. It was stated that sustainable urbanization was dependent on sustainable rural development.

176. Delegations underscored the need to invest in agriculture and rural development, including fulfilment of commitments made under regional plans and strategies. The need for subsidies was also noted. Delegations called on donors to fulfil their commitments, in accordance with the Monterrey Consensus.

177. The need to maximize agricultural productivity, and to reinforce extension services and access to technology, was recognized. Poor infrastructure in Africa was noted as a barrier hindering access to markets, depriving farmers of adequate incentives to increase food production in response to rising prices. In the global context, there was also a call for a speedy conclusion to the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations.

178. Several participants stressed that Africa's drylands offered opportunities for reclaiming potentially valuable resources at a relatively low investment cost, contributing in the process to realization of climate change adaptation and mitigation objectives. The role of sustainable tourism was noted.

179. Attention was drawn to the importance of South-South and tripartite cooperation in relation to agriculture and food security. Some delegations called for the strengthening of research and development capacities in agriculture in the African region. Others noted the need for capacity-building, particularly with respect to land, and the need for technology transfer and debt relief for African countries.

Western Asia

180. The thematic issues under review posed particular challenges in Western Asia. Scarce water resources were identified by participants as one of the main factors limiting agricultural and rural development. The region was experiencing rapid population growth, and poverty levels varied widely from country to country. It was noted that desertification and land degradation remained a problem; however, countries in the region were taking action with respect to soil improvement, conservation and improved irrigation practices. As droughts had occurred with greater frequency, countries had responded with a range of measures, but obstacles remained in implementing an approach based on risk management.

181. It was noted that escalating food prices were taking a toll on the poor in the region. Food insecurity was not merely an agricultural issue but one that needed to be addressed in the context of the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development. A number of delegations noted the need to have political stability in fully implementing sustainable development in the region.

182. Delegations underscored that both man-made and natural processes of desertification needed to be addressed. To combat drought, action was being taken at the regional level to improve early warning and drought forecasting, as well as observation and data collection. Countries in the region were taking

action to address the urban overlap with agricultural land, and introducing participatory approaches in land planning and management.

183. Participants noted the challenges to agriculture in the region, such as lack of access to irrigation, poor agricultural practices and salination of land. Lack of access to technology remained a major barrier but technology transfer had to be matched with the know-how and skills that enabled its efficient use. It was emphasized that the region could benefit from the shift to less water-intensive crops. The improvement of agricultural productivity, health and educational services was noted as important to achieving sustainable development in the region.

184. Delegations noted that agricultural producers in the region faced difficulties in securing access to markets. Non-tariff barriers to trade, in particular environmental and food safety standards, were being addressed through regional programmes directed at small producers. In response, countries in the region were taking action to support agriculture and trade within the region.

185. Participants discussed the potential and costs of desalination plants for water supply. It was noted that although desalination had traditionally been a costly option, recent advances in technology meant that it had become more affordable. Although desalination was at present being used for potable water only, there were plans to treat saline water in rural areas for agricultural use.

Asia and the Pacific

186. Participants stressed the economic diversity and dynamism of the Asia and Pacific region with the largest population in the world, in which some of the richest and the poorest countries, as well as the biggest importers and exporters of agricultural products, were located. The unique nature of the region contributed to the potential and strengthening of intraregional cooperation. It was noted that countries of the region were making progress in all of the areas under discussion, while at the same time facing serious challenges.

187. Delegations noted that the impediments, barriers and constraints to the region's meeting the commitments and targets set in relation to the current thematic cluster of issues included: slow growth in agricultural production; inadequate investment in the agricultural sector; inequity in market access for agricultural products; intensive use of land and water resources; severe natural disasters; a widening gap between urban and rural areas; shortfalls as regards institutions, governance and infrastructure; increase in oil prices; lack of technology and capacity; and inadequate financial resources for scientific research. It was also noted that the region had the largest population affected by land degradation, drought and desertification.

188. Participants noted that lessons learned and best practices included empowering local communities, securing land tenure, promoting public and private partnerships, encouraging the participation and efforts of all stakeholders, promoting eco-efficiency as part of the green growth approach, and addressing the needs of vulnerable segments of society, including small farmers and women.

189. The need to increase investment in the agricultural sector, including research and development, was emphasized. Microfinance was underscored as a promising form of investment.

190. It was noted that rural and urban development should be balanced through appropriate strategies. The Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification should be fully and effectively used to combat desertification and land degradation. Regional and subregional cooperation in dealing with transboundary pollution problems should be enhanced.

191. Delegations stressed that the impact of climate change had already been felt across the region, including on agricultural production and food security. Many participants noted that the current food crisis was linked to climate change, water problems and soaring oil prices. Participants emphasized that a comprehensive approach should be taken to finding solutions for those problems. It was noted that the mitigation and adaptation strategies of climate change should encompass the perspectives of gender, early warning system, disaster risk reduction and adequate funding.

192. Participants noted that biofuels could play a key role in improving access to energy; however, a careful approach was required and they should be developed in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way. Both energy security and food security should be fully taken into account and be balanced.

Latin America and the Caribbean

193. Participants noted that Latin America and the Caribbean had registered productivity growth, including in the agricultural sector, while simultaneously experiencing the effects of environmental degradation. With the exception of the Caribbean subregion, in which there had been an increase in the percentage of forested land, deforestation, drought, desertification, soil degradation and unsustainable land use continued to threaten the region as a whole. Recent years had seen a significant increase in desertification in the region. Rising demand for and inequitable access to natural resources, including land, water and energy, were also cited as constraints to sustainable development. Additional challenges, including high levels of poverty, rural-to-urban migration, and the vulnerability of the agricultural sector to economic shocks and natural disasters were also underscored.

194. Delegations noted that the effects of climate change had already been felt throughout the region, particularly in the Caribbean subregion. In that regard, the vulnerabilities of the small island developing States of the Caribbean, especially to food insecurity, rising energy prices and the rise in sea levels, were underscored. It was emphasized that such characteristics as limited natural resources and vulnerability to shocks continued to threaten the sustainable development of the small island developing States in the region.

195. The effects of trade liberalization and agricultural subsidies on rural development, environment, agro-industries and food security were cited as a primary concern in the region. It was suggested that the elimination of agricultural subsidies could provide multiple benefits, including boosting production in the developing countries of the region and providing additional

resources for financing for development. Participants also noted that a balance between food and biofuel production was needed, especially given the rising global food and energy prices. In that regard, it was suggested that land not suitable for agricultural production be targeted for the production of biopharmaceuticals and biofuels.

196. Participants highlighted the need for an integrated approach to sustainable development that considered the linkages among poverty, food and energy security, environment and economic growth. The need for a balanced approach to climate change that did not undermine rural industries, trade or food security in developing countries was emphasized. It was noted that regional integration and South-South cooperation could help to spur growth. In that regard, reference was made to regional initiatives that focused on social development, particularly education, literacy, health and primary services.

197. The need to focus on supporting and advancing sustainable development efforts through financing, investment and public-private partnerships was underscored. It was noted that technology transfer and capacity-building were key to raising agricultural and rural productivity. Participants called for support from the international community to promote high labour standards for rural workers.

Economic Commission for Europe region

198. Participants underlined that more sustainable agriculture and farming was a crucial issue for the ECE region as well as for developing regions, in particular Africa. Land degradation, desertification and drought had been recognized as essential challenges for development and the ecosystems of the region. Soil degradation and the impact of industrial pollution were also recognized as important challenges.

199. It was noted that the management of agriculture and ecosystems should be better integrated, while the interaction between sustainable farming and other aspects of sustainable consumption and production policies must be reinforced. The agricultural markets should be stabilized in order to foster smooth development of rural areas. It was emphasized that agro-system management and organic farming needed to be promoted throughout the region. It was noted that farmers' organizations contributed to the sustainable development of the agricultural sector and should be reinforced.

200. Delegations underscored that the interlinkages between environment and agriculture should be considered an important dimension of land policy. Integrating the multiple aspects of land policy would encourage farmers to preserve the environment and favour optimal allocation of resources. It was noted that integrated land management required good governance and a guarantee of equal access to land for women and indigenous peoples and should be embraced through an interdisciplinary approach. It was also noted that land management must be based on clear and unambiguous land tenure.

201. It was emphasized that the current agricultural crisis might help farmers to rationalize agricultural production: the rise in prices could boost new investments, leading to an increase in production. It was noted, however, that the potential implications for the environment of a rapid growth in output

might be negative, which called for a cautious approach to agricultural management.

202. Participants noted that there were significant regional and national differences in priorities and implementation experiences both within the region and globally. At the same time, it was noted that many of the remarks made during the regional session on Africa coincided with the points made in regard to the ECE region. It was emphasized that a number of common points of analysis could lead to strengthening of cooperation between the two regions, with the aim of reaching the Millennium Development Goals along the path of sustainable development.

203. Delegations expressed the view that the results of all of the regional implementation meetings should be fully taken into account at the global level. It was noted that the sharing of best practices and the dissemination of information would create policymaking synergies that fed into national, regional and subregional implementation efforts, thereby bringing the world closer to achieving the commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It was also noted that there was need for further integration of the five regional inputs at future sessions of the Commission.

V. Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

204. The Commission on Sustainable Development is mandated to serve as the primary intergovernmental body responsible for the implementation of and follow-up to the commitments related to small island developing States, including those contained in the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation. In accordance with decision 13/1 of the Commission, one day at each of its review sessions is to be devoted to monitoring the progress made in the implementation of the Programme and Strategy. At the Commission's sixteenth session, that discussion was held on 12 May 2008.

205. Introductory statements were made by the Chairman, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. The importance of a regular review of the Barbados Programme of Action was underscored, as was the need to focus on its implementation. The Commission's mandate as the forum for the review was reiterated. Concern and regret were expressed that the scheduling of the work of the Commission had not afforded a day for the exclusive review of the sustainable development challenges facing the small island developing States. The importance of reserving such a day during the Commission's review sessions was underscored.

206. The review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation was undertaken in the context of a general debate. Concern was expressed at the slow rate of implementation.

It was noted that, while the small island developing States themselves had made some progress at the national and regional levels in building institutional capacity for sustainable development, formulating strategies and action plans and carrying out policy reforms, many continued to encounter constraints which had impeded their sustainable development. Such constraints included limited technical, financial and human resources.

207. Delegations addressed the necessary means of implementation to advance the agenda for the sustainable development of small island developing States, inter alia, the need to reverse the downward trend in international financial flows to those States, including ODA, to improve terms of trade, to facilitate the transfer of appropriate technology and to strengthen capacity-building in support of their efforts to adapt to climate change.

208. Delegations drew attention to the structural disadvantages of small island developing States in terms of a small land area and population and resource base, and a high dependence on imports. Many delegations pointed out that many small island developing States had been particularly affected by the current dramatic rise in food and energy prices, which decreased their level of food security. It was noted that most small island developing States, given their limited productive capacities, had not benefited as a group from the expansion of global trade and investment. The importance of a favourable external environment in respect of finance, investment and trade to support the sustainable development of those States was thus recognized.

209. An integrated review of the thematic issues under consideration by the Commission was undertaken through two panel-led discussions on sustainable land management and drought and desertification. The panel discussions also addressed land policy administration and management and the challenges and impacts of desertification, drought and invasive species in small island developing States. Delegations stressed the vulnerability of such States, which was exacerbated by the effects of climate change, including rise in sea levels, coral bleaching due to warming seas, increasing threats to freshwater supply, propagation of invasive alien species, and increased frequency and intensity of cyclones, hurricanes and other extreme weather events. Also considered was the need for effective land use strategies to address the increasing pressure on limited land resources through strengthened human resource and institutional capacity and management of watersheds, coastal zones and land use change.

210. Also reviewed were agriculture and rural development. Discussions focused on agro-tourism and a range of niche markets which offered scope for the development of rural industries. Tourism was highlighted as a growth sector that provided opportunities for direct revenue transactions with rural communities, thus contributing to the revitalization of agriculture and rural development, the strengthening of food security in small island developing States and the promotion of the well-being of rural communities. The sustainable management of fisheries, forestry and agriculture and freshwater resources was also highlighted as important for improving food security and access in small island developing States.

211. The contribution to be made to the sustainable development of small island developing States through cooperation among the various stakeholders was highlighted. International partnerships, including public-private

partnerships and South-South cooperation were recognized for their potential to contribute constructively to the mobilization of resources in support of small island developing States.

212. Support was widely expressed for the opportunity afforded by the day to review the achievements and continuing challenges faced by small island developing States in respect of the thematic cluster of issues under discussion. The ongoing efforts of small island developing States and their commitment to innovative action were noted. Commitments of continued support for the sustainable development efforts of small island developing States were expressed. The need was underscored for strengthening the Secretariat unit for small island developing States, in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions, to support the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy.

VI. Implementation of the decisions on water and sanitation and their interlinkages taken by the Commission at its thirteenth session

213. It was noted that the decisions adopted by the Commission at its thirteenth session in 2005 reflected a firm intergovernmental consensus on the critical role that access to water and basic sanitation played in the overall achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including the eradication of poverty. Also, it was overwhelmingly recognized that integrated water resources management was the framework for the entire water sector and an essential tool for effectively managing water resources and water-related issues. Many countries indicated that review by the Commission of progress in regard to water and sanitation that went beyond stocktaking should take place in 2012. A few countries indicated that they preferred to go beyond stocktaking at the current session.

214. Climate change was identified as a major challenge for many countries in terms of its potential impact on water and food security, contributing, in particular, to an increase in extreme hydrological events, such as floods and drought. Speakers noted the importance of mainstreaming adaptation to climate change in the water management process and of the development of concrete measures in that regard.

215. Various aspects of water and sanitation were addressed, including: the importance of global and national monitoring of the sector at all levels; the need for reliable data supported by improved knowledge and research; transfer of technology and capacity-building; the importance of water governance and a participatory approach to water and sanitation; the role of partnerships, including the public-private partnership; and the importance of strengthening water utilities to extend the provision of services. Many countries pointed to limited financial resources as the main constraint in achieving water and sanitation goals.

Access to safe drinking water and sanitation services

216. The importance of access to safe drinking water and sanitation services for poverty alleviation and for meeting other Millennium Development Goals was emphasized and, in particular, its interlinkages with health. Many delegations urged all stakeholders to take the actions necessary to accelerate progress. Some highlighted access to water and sanitation as a human right. It was noted that women bore the heaviest burden of securing water supplies for household needs and had an important role in hygiene education and water management. However, the priority given to water and sanitation by developing countries in their national development plans had not been adequately echoed and supported at the international level.

217. It was noted that progress had been made towards achieving access to safe drinking water but current trends indicated that the sanitation target would not be met. Progress had been uneven among regions and also within countries, particularly in regard to rural areas which often lagged behind. In addition to limited availability of financial resources, the lack of legislation and national policies for water and sanitation continued to impede progress.

218. The absence of water treatment facilities in certain areas posed an obstacle to environmental management and the provision of safe drinking water. That obstacle could be overcome by developing and implementing sustainable water and sanitation plans which took into account wastewater management. In that regard, it was important to use technologies that were suited to local conditions.

219. Further investment in water supply and sanitation and integrated water resources management, in particular by national Governments, the private sector and through ODA, was required to accelerate progress towards meeting the water-related targets, especially for sanitation, particularly in rural areas. That alone would not be sufficient: there was a need to explore innovative mechanisms for resource mobilization using, for example, local capital markets.

220. Many speakers called for the provision of support to further strengthen local institutional capacities in respect of water and sanitation-related issues, including hygiene education and infrastructural development. This would help in reducing the occurrence of waterborne diseases and the burden of health-related costs.

Partnerships for capacity-building and the transfer of technology

221. The importance of partnerships to support the efforts made in formulating and implementing water and sanitation policies was emphasized; they added value to the assistance provided through ODA and international cooperation. Many speakers shared successful examples of North-South and South-South cooperation and expressed their readiness to share their experiences, technologies and best practices. Scaling up of those practices, however, continued to remain an important challenge. On the issue of technology transfer, many speakers stressed the importance of promoting access to appropriate low-cost and environmentally sustainable water use and

supply technologies, in which North-South and South-South cooperation and other similar partnerships could play an important role.

Efficiency of water utilities

222. The absence in many countries of a legal and regulatory environment that stimulated good governance hindered water and sanitation utilities from operating in a cost-effective way and providing reliable and sustainable services. Strengthening the technical capacities of utility workers and staff could improve the effectiveness of those utilities.

223. Investing in hydraulic infrastructure and the maintenance of existing water infrastructure was necessary for stimulating economic growth and social development. Various mechanisms to finance these investments were identified. Some participants emphasized that implementing cost-recovery policies was vital for the operational sustainability of water utilities and for expanding the provision of services.

224. The exchange of information among utilities could be seen as a cost-efficient and effective way of sharing experiences and best practices in managing water utilities and extending their service coverage. In addition to providing technical support to urban utilities, strengthening the capacities of rural water operators should receive priority, especially through sharing of successful examples.

Involvement of stakeholders

225. Involving stakeholders in decision-making processes could contribute to their sustainable livelihoods. Some countries reported the full involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of their water resources management and water and sanitation programmes. Evidence suggested that water policy and programmes that encourage the involvement of water users' associations and local governments in the operation, maintenance and management of water and sanitation facilities led to enhanced sustainability of the systems and more sustained delivery of services.

Monitoring and reporting

226. The Joint Monitoring Programme of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund was an important mechanism for monitoring the progress made towards achieving water and sanitation targets. Many speakers noted that inadequate data gathering, analysis and prediction was an obstacle to understanding and addressing issues of water resources management, access to water and sanitation and the impacts of climate change on water variability. Also, difficulties had been observed in monitoring the implementation of integrated water resources management efforts.

227. It was noted that monitoring methodology needed to be tailored to the local environment and conditions. Measuring trends and progress required data and information to strengthen collaboration among water-related entities and statistical offices. Lack of human and institutional capacity and lack of resources, both from national and international sources, were added challenges.

228. Effective monitoring and follow-up of water and sanitation-related decisions were crucial means to further mobilize and streamline resources for water, sanitation and integrated water resources management. In that respect, additional efforts were needed to make the review by the Commission of water and sanitation at its twentieth session in 2012 more meaningful. To that end, strengthening monitoring capacities and enhancing further coordination of existing monitoring processes at all levels would be important.

229. While noting the successful efforts of UN-Water, there was a call for its increased role in monitoring the progress made in regard to water, sanitation and commitments in regard to integrated water resources management. Monitoring mechanisms, however, must consider equity and ecological concerns, along with global targets.

Integrated water resources management

230. Integrated water resources management was an essential tool for effectively managing water resources and improving the delivery of water services. However, the process needed to be tailored to local conditions by establishing water governance that involved various stakeholders and by adopting integrated water resources management approaches at basin level that would address water quantity and quality, drought and floods. In addition, water research and science play an important role in advancing the principles of integrated water resources management and the implementation of the process.

231. Strong participation by stakeholders, in particular in the local context, through the establishment of water resource bodies at the national, provincial and basin levels, would be a step in the direction of promoting balanced approaches to integrated water resources management. Reforms made with the view of decentralizing decision-making and intervention processes at the community, river catchment and national levels must be guided by national water policy anchored in integrated water resources management principles. Accordingly, water issues need to be set high in the political agenda of national development strategies, poverty reduction plans and national budgets, and be integrated in other sectoral policies.

232. Integrated water resources management should incorporate the three pillars of sustainable development. Experiences at the basin or catchment level had shown successful results, in particular in regard to the involvement of local actors, transparent decision-making, equitable water use, and various innovative mechanisms for financing water management. In addition to clear legislative frameworks at the basin level, the polluter-pays principle was identified as one of the successful tools for securing a sound basis for the implementation of the integrated water resources management process.

233. Water issues were not simply technical and institutional issues but had an intrinsic political content which had to be explicitly considered in order to resolve difficulties linked to competition among stakeholders and interests. In that regard, various speakers pointed to the need for more transboundary agreements to share the expected benefits of better cooperation in respect of international water courses or groundwater resources.

234. Some countries suggested the need for discussing a new paradigm for integrated water resources management which would focus more on moving from the plan and process stage to advancing to implementation that was measurable with tangible indicators. Within the context of integrated water resources management, transboundary water resources management, balancing the competing uses of water, and the linkages between water-related extreme events and health also needed to be considered. Some expressed the need to discuss progress on water-related issues during the seventeenth session of the Commission and not wait for the next review in 2012.

235. More frequent droughts increased water scarcity. Decreasing availability of water reduced agriculture production and contributed to food shortages and hunger. Those events were beyond the control of local people and required appropriate public and collective action in order to avoid situations that would lead to prolonged food insecurity. Reducing the impacts of climate change required programmes and measures of mitigation and adaptation that were directly linked to water management. Mainstreaming climate change and its impacts into the water management planning process would facilitate adaptation, but it must be supported by appropriate national legislation.

VII. Interactive discussion with major groups

Introduction

236. At its sixteenth session, the Commission continued its tradition of encouraging the participation of major groups in its deliberations and saw an enhanced contribution by major groups, as reflected in the increased number of interventions in the thematic discussions.

237. The Commission held two multi-stakeholder dialogues as part of its official proceedings, one involving representatives of partnerships for sustainable development. The multi-stakeholder dialogue, held on 6 May, involved representatives of women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, the scientific and technological community, and farmers. Lead organizations from each sector had been invited by the secretariat to consult with their constituencies and prepare official papers for the dialogue and to organize the participation of their delegations. The dialogue provided an opportunity for a focused discussion of the role of major groups in promoting the implementation activities in relation to the thematic cluster of issues under review.

238. On 9 May, the dialogue held among major groups, Governments, and representatives of partnerships for sustainable development provided a unique opportunity for a focused discussion of the role of partners in supporting and expediting the implementation of sustainable development efforts, with special attention given to the issues under review. The dialogue represented a new effort by the Commission to inspire a practical and dynamic discussion among various stakeholders. It was the first time since the World Summit on Sustainable Development that representatives of major groups and partnerships had held a conversation with Governments in their efforts to support and facilitate implementation. The dialogue included representatives of the nine

major groups and representatives of six of the partnerships registered with the Commission, and was supported by information contained in the report of the Secretary-General on partnerships for sustainable development (E/CN.17/2008/10) and a background paper on the 98 partnerships registered with the Commission.

239. During the two interactive discussions, major groups, Governments, and representatives of partnerships highlighted a number of issues, as summarized below.

Obstacles and constraints

240. Limited access to land rights, credit, technology, markets and extension services severely constrained agricultural productivity and sustainable livelihoods, especially for women farmers in developing countries. A farmer-centred approach to agricultural partnerships was important, but poor communication between farmers' organizations and Governments often impeded the work of farmers' associations.

241. The response to the current food crisis required an increase in agricultural productivity while ensuring that natural resources were managed in a sustainable manner and ecosystems were preserved. Reducing pre-harvest and post-harvest losses, which average around 50 per cent globally and were highest in developing countries, demanded the transfer and dissemination of existing technologies and management practices, including risk management tools, and the provision of good science to small-scale farmers in rural areas. The response to the food crisis should look at both root causes and symptoms, but disaggregated statistics of natural, human, social and physical capital were often missing. Further studies should help to increase understanding of the impacts of biotechnology and biofuels in relation to food security with a view to developing a balance between biofuels and food production.

242. Lack of the right type of agricultural policy and of enabling environments also represented an impediment for farmers. Small-scale agriculture should be promoted since large-scale agricultural practices might not be appropriate for some groups, such as indigenous peoples, for whom land was the key resource for survival. Public-private partnerships tended to be focused on supply rather than driven by demand and could be improved, especially in regard to agricultural research. Particular attention needed to be paid to the appropriate use of chemicals in agriculture in order to ensure human safety and reduce unwanted impacts. Unsustainable agricultural production patterns were the cause of 40,000 deaths from pesticide use each year. More should be done to provide decent work and to address inequalities among agricultural workers. In addition, more must be done to improve sustainable livestock production, since national planning generally excluded the 3 million pastoralists in Africa whose traditional livelihoods were increasingly threatened by globalization and climate change.

Lessons learned and best practices

243. It was clear that major groups must be fully engaged and included in decision-making processes in order to promote sustainable development; the active participation of major groups in the work of the Commission was

widely praised. Representatives of indigenous peoples welcomed the recent adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for partnering with Governments, and representatives of local authorities underlined that a bottom-up, participatory approach to development could ensure the active engagement of major groups in the broader sustainable development discussion.

244. Advancing the implementation of sustainable development through multi-stakeholder partnerships involved a number of strategies for success. Nurturing the early stages of a partnership and feeding it into larger organizations for additional support had proven to be helpful. Investing in the capacity-building of major groups involved in partnerships could be achieved through the provision of decent work, respect for human rights, transfer of responsibility to the local level, and blending of science and technology with local knowledge.

245. There were many examples of successful case studies and partnerships which provided models of sustainable agriculture and rural development that incorporated indigenous knowledge systems and practices, land use planning, water management, small enterprise development and income generation. Yet those efforts required more support if they were to be scaled up enough to make significant progress. Knowledge-sharing systems should be strengthened, results should be documented and shared, and successful efforts should be replicated. Partnerships which incorporated local ownership, a clear understanding of goals, the active collaboration of all stakeholders, good donor coordination, the flexibility to respond to changing situations and the ability to keep partners involved in the long term were the most successful.

246. An energetic force was emerging: young people who intended to hold Governments responsible for their commitments. Young people were increasingly an integral part of governmental delegations in some regions, and their presence as current and future producers and leaders had inspired the creation of new outreach education programmes in sustainable agriculture and rural development. The integration of sustainability themes into all levels of education was an important measure that would ensure that future generations were conscious of sustainable development.

Means of implementation

247. There was a pronounced need for investment in agricultural infrastructure, extension services, research, appropriate technologies, risk management tools, weather forecasting and early warning systems. However, international resource flows often did not reach the agricultural sector, which received only 4 per cent of ODA flows. Particular emphasis should be placed on facilitating the access of smallholder farmers to such services.

248. It could be difficult to mobilize innovative financial mechanisms and other support for partnerships, especially in the early stages, and there was often a lack of funding for institution- and capacity-building. While private funding was increasing, the decline in public funding was a concern. Partners were challenged to translate a long-term vision into short-term benefits for local communities, to foster inclusiveness and trust among partners at the local level, and to engage local communities and empower them to own their

projects. The considerable coordination efforts required of partnerships demanded additional resources, and could result in duplication and overlapping of effort, particularly at the regional level. Understanding how to manage competitiveness, recognize rights and take social issues into account, especially at the global level, was crucial.

249. In both rural and urban areas, channelling technological and financial support through local authorities and entrusting them with responsibility to provide sustainable services related to energy, water, sanitation and economic development could empower them to take more direct and effective action at the community level. More women should be placed in decision- and policymaking positions, and women should be given greater access to development services, credit and markets.

Continuing challenges

250. Poverty remained the greatest challenge, and was becoming increasingly urbanized. As rural-urban migration in Africa accelerated, so was the percentage of urban residents living in slums, and the impact on women and children was especially adverse. At least 1 billion people lived without basic services and adequate food supplies. Both urban and rural poverty must be tackled with the involvement of local communities in order to deal with the emerging food crisis, produce decent employment and protect fundamental human rights. Promoting good governance at the national and international levels could ensure that local governments were in place to implement appropriate measures.

Part two

VIII. High-level segment

251. The high-level segment of the Commission's sixteenth session was held from 14 to 16 May 2008. The Chairman of the Commission, Francis Nhema, Minister of Environment and Tourism of Zimbabwe, chaired the segment.

252. The present summary represents the views expressed during the high-level segment; it does not reflect a consensus.

253. In his opening statement, the Secretary-General emphasized the need for reinvigorating agriculture and noted that he had created a task force on the global food crisis. The task force would spearhead urgent, concerted and sustained action by the United Nations system, in cooperation with other key actors, to address both immediate food needs and the medium- and long-term challenge of boosting agricultural production to feed the world's growing population. He stressed the projected impacts of climate change on agriculture, rural development, land, drought and desertification and emphasized the particular vulnerabilities of Africa and the small island developing States.

254. The high-level segment comprised four ministerial sessions, focusing on the way forward; two parallel round-table meetings, with one focusing on investing in Africa to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development, and the other on interlinkages among the thematic

issues, including adaptation to climate change in the context of sustainable development. In addition, there were two dialogue sessions, one with organizations of the United Nations system and the other with representatives of major groups. Ministerial discussions were preceded by thematic and regional discussions, a dialogue with major groups and representatives of partnerships, the review of the Barbados Programme of Action and Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, and the review of the decisions on water and sanitation taken by the Commission at its thirteenth session.

255. Ministers identified a broad range of issues to be addressed by the Commission at its seventeenth session, the policy session, including the following:

(a) Poverty eradication remained a central policy objective in developing countries, and agricultural and rural development were essential to its attainment;

(b) Addressing the means of implementation, including meeting commitments in relation to financing for development, trade, technology transfer, scientific knowledge, education and capacity-building, were critical to ensuring progress;

(c) The current food crisis had highlighted the consequences for food security of neglecting agriculture and the urgency in redressing that situation. There were multiple factors contributing to the crisis, many of which were interlinked, and an integrated response was needed;

(d) Climate change was highlighted by many as having important implications for all issues in the thematic cluster, with particular challenges for Africa and small island developing States;

(e) Progress in addressing the challenges identified during the sixteenth session of the Commission required strengthened international cooperation, strong political commitment from Governments and the active engagement of all major groups;

(f) Greater policy coherence and coherence of donor support was required in regard to agriculture and the other issues under consideration;

(g) Good governance at all levels was important in promoting progress towards sustainable development;

(h) It was emphasized that Governments needed policy space to address their sustainable development challenges in ways best suited to national circumstances;

(i) The importance of the successful and timely conclusion of the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations was emphasized;

(j) The themes on the agenda should be seen as interlinked and be addressed in an integrated manner, taking account of the cross-cutting issues contained in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

(k) Poverty eradication, change in consumption and production patterns, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and with developed countries taking the lead, and protection

and management of the natural resource base for economic and social development were overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development. Preservation of biodiversity was also crucial;

(l) South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation all need to be encouraged to promote the sharing of technology, knowledge and practical experience and know-how;

Agriculture

(m) The multilateral trading system, as well as regional trading arrangements, needed to be more supportive of agriculture, in particular through improved market access for the agricultural exports of developing countries, including processed agricultural exports, and through the reduction or elimination of subsidies;

(n) Many highlighted the importance of the development dimension of the Doha Round of trade negotiations and the need to provide support for capacity-building in order to strengthen the productive capacity in developing countries;

(o) Sizeable new investments would be required in the agricultural sector in coming years to boost substantially agricultural production, especially in developing countries and in particular in Africa. Public agricultural research and development efforts, focused on sustainably enhancing the food and other crop production of small farmers, deserved particular attention;

(p) Investments would also be needed in a range of agricultural, including livestock, infrastructure, such as feeding pens, silos and other storage facilities, and agro-processing, testing and certification, processes;

(q) Agricultural investments needed to be informed by a combination of the best traditional knowledge and the most recent scientific knowledge related to the sustainable management of land, water and other natural resources;

(r) Strengthened national and international policies in support of technology transfer, knowledge transfer and capacity-building were essential to improving productivity in agriculture;

(s) Institutions and practices needed to be strengthened along the entire agricultural supply chain, including agricultural research and development, supply of affordable inputs, provision of credit, enhancement of extension services, development and transfer of post-harvest technologies, and strengthening of marketing and distribution systems. Social, economic and environmental aspects needed to be taken into account throughout the agricultural cycle;

(t) It was necessary to develop sanitary and phytosanitary standards and food labelling requirements in a transparent and participatory manner. In that respect, support was needed for developing country agricultural producers and processors to enable them to meet the agreed sanitary and phytosanitary standards and food labelling requirements of major export markets;

(u) The primary roles of women in agriculture, notably in Africa, needed to be recognized and measures devised to enhance their productivity further while addressing the specific challenges they might face in access to land, credit and the legal system;

(v) Biofuels were an increasing source of demand for agricultural products. The potential of biofuels to improve incomes for farmers throughout the world was mentioned, provided that their development did not compromise food security and environmental concerns and that small farmers shared in the benefits. The need for further research and development into second generation biofuels was highlighted. The need to share technical information about biofuel sustainability was emphasized by some, and some emphasized the need for developing sustainability criteria;

Rural development

(w) Investment in infrastructure was critical to boosting agriculture and rural development. Priorities would differ according to local, national and regional circumstances, but adequate rural roads and other means of transport, irrigation and water storage, electrification and telecommunications were all-important. Infrastructure for social development, including rural health-care facilities and schools, was also crucial;

(x) Domestic public investment would be a vital source of finance for agriculture and rural infrastructure. While many governments had increased those investments, further resources were needed. External sources of financing were also vital. ODA for agricultural and rural development needed to be substantially increased;

(y) New and innovative sources and methods of finance, including public-private partnerships, might be able to contribute to meeting the above-mentioned financing needs;

(z) Diversification of rural economies was a high priority, including through the strengthening of productive capacity, the development of value-added agro-processing, the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises and other rural industries, rural cooperatives and the expansion of social, financial, infrastructural and tourism services in rural areas. Such efforts should create new employment opportunities for young people in rural areas;

(aa) Enhanced access to global markets, technology transfer and sharing of experiences, know-how and best practices were all highlighted as important to rural development;

(bb) Increased rural finance on favourable terms needed to be made available to small-scale entrepreneurs through a variety of means, including loan guarantees, microcredit and venture capital;

(cc) Local authorities and communities played a vital role in the management of land, water and other natural resources in rural areas, and their capacities needed to be strengthened. Local authorities were also often responsible for investment in and maintenance of infrastructure and needed access to adequate financial resources for that purpose;

Land

(dd) Sustainable land management practices were essential to maintaining the social, economic and environmental functions of land for sustaining livelihoods and supporting food security;

(ee) Land management and planning capacities, including cadastral surveys, titling and zoning to facilitate equitable access to land and sustainable patterns of land use, needed to be improved. Access to adapted information systems could help to strengthen the capacities of governments;

(ff) Land management and planning required an integrated approach that took into consideration the important ecosystem functions that land provided. Sustainable land management and soil monitoring and protection played important roles in mitigating and adapting to climate change, as did forests;

(gg) Improved land tenure security could facilitate investment by farmers and rural communities in sustainable land management practices. Addressing the land access and security of tenure rights of women and indigenous peoples deserved special attention;

(hh) The provision of more secure land tenure and livelihoods in the pastoral livestock sector, together with research into effective stock breeding and management of pasture lands, would help to support sustainable use and management of rangelands;

(ii) The landless poor, including agricultural workers, were especially vulnerable to food and economic insecurity, and measures were needed to provide them with diversified and stable sources of income and, where possible, access to land;

Drought

(jj) Moving to a proactive, risk-based approach in drought management had proven to be effective in preventing or reducing the human, physical and economic losses associated with drought;

(kk) Sharing of know-how and access to technologies for effective management and conservation of scarce water resources would be critical to strengthening the resilience of farming and pastoral communities to drought and climate change;

(ll) An informed selection of crop patterns that accounted for seasonal availability and water productivity responses of crops and crop varieties had become an important element of crop management under drought conditions. Know-how in that area should be widely shared;

(mm)There was a need to devote increased attention and resources to public awareness efforts and to drought early warning and monitoring systems. Developing countries in particular needed improved access to accurate and timely climatic and meteorological information;

(nn) Drought had become an important risk factor in the investment decisions of both agricultural producers and financial institutions working with farmers. Index-based weather insurance represented an emerging innovative

scheme for managing the risks associated with drought but required improved meteorological data;

Desertification

(oo) Support for the full implementation and adequate funding of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, including its 10-year strategic plan and framework (2008-2018) was urgently needed. The Convention was the only legally binding agreement on land issues that systematically addressed land degradation and desertification;

(pp) Effective implementation of national action plans to combat desertification in affected countries required continued support from bilateral and multilateral donors in regard to finance, transfer of appropriate and affordable technologies and corresponding know-how, strengthening of scientific research and capacity-building at all levels;

(qq) Sustainable grazing strategies and other sustainable practices in dryland agriculture and livestock raising could yield results in the rehabilitation of degraded grasslands. There was much valuable traditional knowledge available in that regard, but pressures such as population growth and climate change called for adaptation;

(rr) Monitoring of desertification trends, including the identification of hotspots and encroachment on agricultural lands, early warning, including of sand dune movements and dust storms, and the assessment of the socio-economic causes and impacts of desertification were central to the identification of focused interventions;

(ss) There were strong interlinkages between desertification and climate change. Adaptation measures would be crucial to strengthening the resilience of dryland populations and ecosystems;

(tt) The capacities of information and climate observation systems to access and analyse remote sensing data and to disseminate accurate and user-relevant data and information in a timely fashion should be strengthened;

Africa

(uu) The current food crisis had particularly affected Africa, highlighting the continent's food security challenges. Climate change would compound those challenges, as Africa's agriculture was projected to be among the most adversely affected of any region. A strong appeal was made for strengthened African and broader international support for the implementation of NEPAD programmes, not least the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme;

(vv) There was substantial potential to boost food crop productivity on the continent. To do so, Africa needed significantly increased investment in agriculture, including through attainment of the Maputo Declaration target of at least 10 per cent of national budgets devoted to agriculture and rural development;

(ww) Expansion of irrigation networks and improved irrigation methods were vital components of efforts to boost on-farm productivity;

(xx) Farm inputs, such as fertilizers and pesticides, were scarce and expensive in much of Africa. Efforts were needed to make them more accessible and affordable, possibly through investment in regional production facilities at an economic scale, and to increase efficiencies in their use while respecting human health and the environment;

(yy) Crop and other agricultural and livestock research in Africa, including research into crop varieties and farming methods well adapted to projected climate change, needed to be substantially strengthened through enhanced financial and human resource commitments;

(zz) Africa's rural infrastructure urgently needed extension, upgrading and maintenance. A high priority was the road network, including farm-to-market roads, national roads and transborder highways. Electrification and other energy infrastructure, safe drinking water and sanitation, and communications also required large investments. The contribution of renewable energy technologies could be significantly increased;

(aaa) Most African economies remained heavily dependent on one or a few primary commodities. Diversification and industrial development could be advanced, including but not limited to value added to raw materials, including agro-processing, and through provision of support for enterprise creation and enhanced competitiveness in other industries;

(bbb) Community-based and other sustainable tourism ventures could contribute importantly to rural income diversification in Africa. Access to finance and capacity-building for communities, tourism operators and other stakeholders could strengthen that sector;

(ccc) Rural health care needed to be substantially improved, health insurance made more widely available, and medicines for Africa's endemic diseases made more affordable and more widely available;

Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation

(ddd) While small island developing States had themselves made some progress at the national and regional levels in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, many had continued to encounter constraints, including limited technical, financial and human resources, which had impeded their sustainable development efforts;

(eee) The Commission on Sustainable Development, as the primary forum for the regular review of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, should dedicate one day exclusively to that review;

(fff) The small island developing States were at the frontline in responding to climate change and shared in the responsibility for developing solutions in that regard;

(ggg) Because of the structural disadvantages of small island developing States in terms of a small land area, population and resource base and a high dependence on imports, many had been particularly affected by the recent

dramatic rise in food and energy prices, which had decreased their level of food security;

(hhh)Small island developing States needed to develop effective land use strategies to address the increasing pressure on their limited land resources by the strengthening of human resource and institutional capacity and management of watersheds, coastal zones and land use change;

(iii) There would be a continuing need to develop sustainable tourism so that it provided rural communities opportunities for income generation, thus contributing to the revitalization of agriculture and rural development, strengthening of food security in small island developing States and promoting the well-being of rural communities. The need for economic diversification was emphasized;

Water and sanitation

(jjj) Given the sense of urgency for making rapid progress towards achieving the targets established for water and sanitation in the Millennium Development Goals, comprehensive and concerted efforts were needed. The change must begin with demonstrating political commitment by allocating an increased share of the national budget to water and especially the sanitation sector;

(kkk)The above change should be complemented by external development partners in the form of an increased flow of ODA and increased international cooperation in general;

(lll) Meeting water and sanitation targets and facilitating the integrated water resources management process required partnerships among various stakeholders at all levels. The main thrust of those partnerships needed to be on the mobilization of investments to support the rehabilitation and development of infrastructure, building the capacity of local institutions, transfer of technologies and scaling up of good practices, in particular in sanitation;

(mmm) The multiplicity of water-related challenges faced by countries highlighted the importance of advancing integrated water resources management. However, the implementation of the process needed to be guided by specific objectives, against which impacts could be monitored and measured by means of tangible indicators at the national level;

(nnn)While demand for water was increasing for various uses, climate change was contributing to water scarcity in many areas and regions. Implementing demand management measures would help in reducing water losses in public water supply networks, increasing irrigation efficiency, and improving water productivity. Also, there was a need to mainstream adaptation to climate change into integrated water resources management;

(ooo)The role of the United Nations development system in providing capacity-building to support the achievement of the water and sanitation targets in the Millennium Development Goals was emphasized;

(ppp)The successful review of the water and sanitation decisions taken by the Commission at its thirteenth session demonstrated the strong

contributions that could be made by the Commission. The need to strengthen UN-Water was highlighted.

IX. Partnerships fair, learning centre and side events

A. Partnerships fair

256. The partnerships fair, an official part of the annual sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development, was held from 5 to 13 May. With activities focusing on agriculture, drought, desertification, land, rural development and Africa, small island developing States, and water and sanitation, the fair provided a venue for registered Partnerships for Sustainable Development to showcase progress, network with existing and potential partners, create synergies among partnerships and learn from each other's experiences. It also offered participants an opportunity to gather information and discuss the important contribution of innovative initiatives to supporting the implementation of internationally agreed sustainable development goals and objectives.

257. In keeping with the current year's focus on identifying barriers and constraints in implementation, as well as lessons learned and best practices, the partnerships fair aimed to highlight on-the-ground experiences from partnership practitioners working on the current thematic cycle of work, and to maximize opportunities to identify innovative solutions, strategies that had proven effective and emerging possibilities in implementing sustainable development goals and commitments.

258. The partnerships fair featured 5 interactive discussion sessions on partnerships in practice, 15 presentations from Commission-registered partnerships, 2 training sessions and 18 partnership information desks. Activities were well attended, averaging from 35 to 40 participants in the thematic discussions and training sessions. They also generated a high level of interest, given the active and dynamic participation of the audience.

259. Six representatives of Commission-registered partnerships had the opportunity to participate in the first plenary session held since the World Summit on Sustainable Development in which major groups and representatives of partnerships for sustainable development participated in a dialogue with Governments as implementing partners. The plenary session represented a new effort by the Commission to offer a unique opportunity for practical and dynamic dialogue among different stakeholders in their efforts to expedite implementation.

260. At present, the partnerships database contains 342 registered partnerships, of which 101 identified agriculture, drought, desertification, land, rural development and Africa as the primary focus of their activities.

261. Further details of the partnerships fair programme of activities, including biographies of participants and chairpersons, copies of presentations and partnerships wires, are available on the website of the Commission on Sustainable Development (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd16/PF/PF_programme.htm).

B. Learning centre

262. During the session, the learning centre offered 20 courses, held in parallel to the plenary meetings of the Commission on topics related to the themes and cross-cutting issues under review, including education, gender, decision-making tools, financing and national sustainable development strategies. Participants had the opportunity to gain knowledge, know-how and learn of best practice from academics and practitioners active in those areas. Through group instruction, PowerPoint presentations, video screenings and interactive group discussions, course instructors provided specific knowledge and tools, illustrated trends and analyses, highlighted case studies and related lessons learned, challenges faced and prospects for the future in relation to such topics as securing of land rights by women at the grass-roots, innovative agricultural financing in Africa, an educational model for building capacities for sustainable rural development, and linking sustainable land management to climate change. Instructors represented a wide range of universities, research institutions, major groups, and governmental and international institutions.

263. During the sixteenth session of the Commission, 401 participants attended the learning centre. Class size averaged 21 participants, with some courses attracting as many as 50, representing Government delegations, major groups and international institutions and individual experts, many of whom had attended previous sessions. In response to high demand, summaries of the learning centre courses were made available on the website of the Commission on a daily basis, together with copies of the instructor's PowerPoint presentations.

264. Further information on the learning centre is available on the website of the Commission (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd16/learning_centre.htm).

C. Side events

265. A total of 88 side events and related activities were organized by major groups, Governments, United Nations agencies and other international organizations at the margins of the official meetings of the Commission. The side events and related activities focused on issues related to the thematic cluster considered during the current implementation cycle, and provided an opportunity for an informal exchange of views, information and experience.

266. Further details of the side events are available on the website of the Commission (http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd16/sideevents/highlights.pdf).

Chapter III

Review of the implementation of the decisions on water and sanitation and their interlinkages taken by the Commission at its thirteenth session

164. The Commission considered item 4 of its agenda at its 12th to 15th (parallel) meetings, on 12 and 13 May.

165. At the 12th (parallel) meeting, on 12 May, introductory statements were made by the Chairman, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, and the Chairman of UN-Water, Pasquale Steduto.

166. At the same meeting, an introductory statement was made by the representative of the Division for Sustainable Development.

167. Also at the same meeting, presentations were made by the following panellists: Jaehyang So, Manager, Water and Sanitation Program of the World Bank; Piers Cross, Water and Sanitation Programme-Africa; Antonio Miranda, Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation; Roberto Lenton, Global Water Partnership; and Bert Diphoorn, UN-Habitat.

168. At the 13th (parallel) meeting, on 12 May, the Commission held an interactive discussion, during which statements were made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Japan, Zambia, Indonesia, Monaco, France, the United States of America, India, Canada, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Australia, the Czech Republic, Zimbabwe, the Sudan, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, China, the Republic of Korea, Germany, Israel, Italy and the Netherlands, as well as by the observers for Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Malaysia, Argentina, Lesotho, Switzerland, Morocco, Finland and Egypt.

169. A statement was made by the representative of FAO, also on behalf of IFAD.

170. Statements were also made by the representatives of the following major groups: scientific and technological communities; farmers; children and youth; business and industry; and workers and trade unions.

171. A statement was made by the representative of the Stockholm International Water Institute.

172. At the 14th (parallel) meeting, on 13 May, presentations were made by the following panellists: Margaret Catly-Carlson, Global Water Partnership; Michael Muller, South African Department of Water Affairs and Forestry; David Molden, International Water Management Institute; and Daniel Zimmer, World Water Council.

173. At the same meeting, the Commission held an interactive discussion, during which statements were made by the representatives of South Africa, France, Senegal, China, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Germany, as well as by the observers for Estonia, Jordan, Norway, Greece, Slovenia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Jamaica, Morocco, Switzerland, Malawi and Nigeria.

174. A statement was made by the observer for Palestine.

175. A statement was made by the representative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

176. A statement was made by the representative of UNIDO.

177. Statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: women; non-governmental organizations; local authorities; children and youth; farmers; business and industry; and workers and trade unions.

178. At the 15th (parallel) meeting, on 13 May, presentations were made by the following panellists: Bruno Jean Richard Itoua, Minister for Energy and Water, the Congo, and President, African Ministers' Council on Water; Abel Mejía, Water Unit, Infrastructure Department, World Bank; Margaret Batty, Policy and Campaigns, WaterAid; and Omar Giacoman, Evensen Dodge International.

179. At the same meeting, the Commission held an interactive discussion, during which statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, the Russian Federation, China and Canada, as well as by the observers for Uganda, Mali, Togo, Namibia and Barbados.

180. Statements were made by the representatives of the following major groups: indigenous people; business and industry; and workers and trade unions.

Chapter IV

Provisional agenda for the seventeenth session of the Commission

181. The Commission considered item 5 of its agenda at its 21st meeting, on 16 May. It had before it the draft provisional agenda for its seventeenth session (E/CN.17/2008/L.2).

182. At the same meeting, the Commission approved the provisional agenda and recommended it for adoption by the Economic and Social Council (see chap. I, sect. A).

Chapter V

Adoption of the report of the Commission on its sixteenth session

183. At its 21st meeting, on 16 May, the Commission had before it the draft report on its sixteenth session (E/CN.17/2008/L.4).

184. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the draft report and entrusted the Rapporteur with its completion, with a view to its submission to the Economic and Social Council.

Chapter VI
Organizational and other matters

A. Opening and duration of the session

185. The Commission on Sustainable Development held its sixteenth session on 11 May 2007 and from 5 to 16 May 2008. The Commission held 21 meetings, as well as a number of parallel sessions and associated activities.

186. At the 2nd meeting, on 5 May 2008, the Chairman of the sixteenth session of the Commission made a statement. An introductory statement was made by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

B. Election of officers

187. At its 1st meeting, on 11 May 2007, the Commission proceeded to elect, by secret ballot, the Chairman of its sixteenth session. The results of the ballot were as follows:

In favour:	26
Against:	21
Abstentions:	3

188. At the same meeting, Francis D. Nhema (Zimbabwe), having obtained the required majority, was declared elected.

189. Also at the same meeting, the newly elected Chairman made a statement.

190. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Germany (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union) and Canada (also on behalf of New Zealand).

191. At the same meeting, the Commission elected the following members of the Bureau by acclamation:

Vice-Chairmen:
Juan Mario **Dary** (Guatemala)
Javad **Amin-Mansour** (Islamic Republic of Iran)
Daniel **Carmon** (Israel)

as Vice-Chairmen of the sixteenth session. The Commission postponed the election of the remaining Vice-Chairman and the Rapporteur to its next meeting.

192. At its 2nd meeting, on 5 May 2008, the Commission elected by acclamation Tri **Tharyat** (Indonesia) and Melanie **Santizo-Sandoval** (Guatemala) as Vice-Chairpersons to replace, respectively, Javad Amin-Mansour (Islamic Republic of Iran) and Juan Mario Dary (Guatemala), who were no longer in a position to serve as members of the Bureau.

193. At the same meeting, the Commission elected, by acclamation, Sasa **Ojdanic** (Serbia) as Vice-Chairman. The Commission agreed that Mr. Ojdanic would also assume the responsibilities of Rapporteur.

C. Agenda and organization of work

194. At its 2nd meeting, following the statement made by the representative of Grenada (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Alliance of Small Island States), the Commission adopted its provisional agenda, as contained in document E/CN.17/2008/1, and approved its organization of work, as outlined in annex I thereto. The agenda was as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Thematic cluster for the implementation cycle 2008-2009 — review session:
   (a) Agriculture;
   (b) Rural development;
   (c) Land;
   (d) Drought;
   (e) Desertification;
   (f) Africa.
4. Review of the implementation of the decisions on water and sanitation and their interlinkages taken by the Commission at its thirteenth session.
5. Provisional agenda for the seventeenth session of the Commission.
6. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its sixteenth session.

195. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China) and India.

1. Participation of intergovernmental organizations in the work of the sixteenth session of the Commission

196. At its 2nd meeting, the Commission had before it a note by the Secretariat (E/CN.17/2008/L.1) containing requests from the following intergovernmental organizations to participate as observers in the work of the Commission at its sixteenth session: Baltic 21, CAB International and Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific.

Action taken by the Commission

197. At the same meeting, the Commission decided to approve the requests of the three organizations (see chap. I, sect. B, decision 16/1).

2. Proposed strategic framework for the period 2010-2011: subprogramme 4, Sustainable development

198. At the 21st meeting, on 16 May, the Officer-in-Charge of the Division for Sustainable Development introduced the note by the Secretary-General on the proposed strategic framework for the period 2010-2011: subprogramme 4, Sustainable development (E/CN.17/2008/14).

Action taken by the Commission

199. At the same meeting, the Commission decided to take note of the document (see chap. I, sect. B, decision 16/3).

D. Attendance

200. The session was attended by representatives of the 53 States members of the Commission. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and for the European Community, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and secretariats of treaty bodies, as well as observers for intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations, also attended. The list of participants will be issued in document E/CN.17/2008/INF/1.

E. Documentation

201. The documents before the Commission at its sixteenth session are posted on the website of the Division for Sustainable Development: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/docs_csd16.htm).

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